Interview with George F. Jones

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

GEORGE F. JONES

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy

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Q: Today is August 6, 1996. This is an interview with George F. Jones, being done of the behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies. I am Charles Stuart Kennedy. Let's start at the beginning. Can you tell me when and where you were born, and a bit about your family?

JONES: I was born on June 27, 1935, in San Angelo, Texas. My father and my father's father were from Arkansas. Both of them were in state politics in Arkansas; both served first in the State House and then in the State Senate in Arkansas. My father was an attorney, a graduate of one of the first classes at the University of Arkansas Law School. He decided at one point to run for District Attorney in Little Rock, Arkansas. Apparently it was a very bitter campaign and he lost it. At that point he decided the heck with Arkansas. [laughter] He left and moved to Texas where he met my mother who was a native Texan and who was teaching school there. He ran for County Judge of Tom Green County and was County Judge at the time that I was born. I spent my first five years there and then began an itinerant career that I guess has never stopped, maybe not until now. [laughter] He served two terms as County Judge and then lost, was elected to a third term, lost again, and decided that he wanted to go back to Arkansas. He tried that for a year, he tried being a farmer, that didn't work out. Certainly my father was not cut out

to be a farmer. We went back to Texas for a few months. By then, the fall of 1942, we were in World War II and the U.S. government was expanding and demanding people, so he got a job as an attorney with the War Department, so we all went off to Washington, D. C. From the beginning of 1943 to VJ Day [Victory over Japan] in 1945, we lived in Southeast Washington. My mother worked for the Census Bureau and my father for the War Department. In those days they worked on Saturdays. I remember walking about three miles out to the Census Bureau in Maryland to have lunch with my mother on Saturdays. For a year, fourth grade, I went to a private school in downtown Washington, that required me to take a bus and then change to a trolley car. I still remember vividly going down Pennsylvania Avenue on the trolley car and getting off on 18th Street. Not many eight-year-olds would be permitted to do either of those things in Washington or any other urban area today, but that was another era.

When the war ended, I remember my father and I were fishing off a pier somewhere on the Chesapeake Bay, and my mother who was in Washington unexpectedly appeared, running out to us on the pier, to say that the war was over. At that point her only thought was to go back to Texas. So we went back to Texas, to Austin.

Q: You must have been about 10 years of age?

JONES: That's right, I was 10 when we returned to Texas, and I stayed there through high school. I had never expected to go to college anywhere except to the University of Texas, but I saw a poster at my high school about a small college in Indiana that for some reason caught my eye. It was and still is a small men's college in Indiana.

Q: What's the name of it?

JONES: Wabash College, in Crawfordsville, Indiana, population about 13,000 then and it probably hasn't changed much today. The more my mother and I thought about it, the more we liked the idea - but I had to have a scholarship in order to be able to afford it. I got the scholarship and off I went to Wabash. I was very happy with the experience, I've been

sold on small liberal arts college ever since. Somewhere about halfway through my time there, a friend of mine and debate partner (he wasn't talking to me, I was overhearing the conversation) said that he was thinking about taking the Foreign Service exam and going into the Foreign Service. That was certainly the first time I ever thought about it, I think it may have even been the first time I had even heard of it. Again, like seeing the poster about the college, for unknown reasons, it piqued my interest, it caught my attention.

Q: What were you majoring in?

JONES: Political Science. As it turned out, I don't know if he ever took the exam, he certainly never went into the Foreign Service. He became a lawyer and went to Wall Street. But I had always been interested in international relations and foreign countries and international travel, even though I had never been outside of the United States. I don't think my parents had either. I got interested in the Foreign Service but I was still unsure. Before that I had been thinking about journalism, I was seriously interested in that. By the time I got to the point, in my senior year, of choosing a graduate school, I had to make a decision. I was looking at a journalism program at Stanford or a pre-Foreign Service program at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy in Massachusetts. I figured the one I chose was going to determine what career I was going to follow. I chose Fletcher and went off to Fletcher in the fall of 1955.

Q: You did it for how long?

JONES: Just a year. I think now you have to spend two years to get a Masters, but at that time I just spent a year there. While I was there I took the Foreign Service exam in December of 1955 and passed it. I took the oral exam in April of 1956 and was told the famous phrase that we don't tell you whether you pass or fail, we ask you to continue the process.

Q: I want to back up just a bit. While you were at Fletcher, this was probably the first place that you were up against the people who were really dealing with diplomatic matters. Did you gain any impression there about...

JONES: Actually, it was not quite the first experience, because in the summer of 1955, right after college, while still at Wabash I had taken what was then called the Junior Management Assistant examination which was a ticket to a civil service career, and had applied for some summer jobs and had gotten one at AID. So I spent three months in Washington, for the first time since 1945, working for AID. I had a very interesting job working in the policy planning and coordination office of AID. I had some very good supervisors who took a lot of pains to encourage me. Definitely I would have stayed with AID if I hadn't passed the Foreign Service exam. So I had some background to go on when I went to Fletcher.

Q: Can you think of any of the people that you came across at Fletcher that impressed you?

JONES: I think they all impressed me in one way or another. The one I didn't much care for even though he was a considerable name in his field was Ruhl Bartlett who taught Diplomatic History. I didn't like him as a teacher. I also didn't think much of his text book either. Years later at Stanford I met Thomas Bailey who is the bigger name, who was the big name in American diplomatic history, and I liked his book, A Diplomatic History of the American People, much, much better.

Q: I never met him, but I certainly used Bailey as my textbook. When you took the Foreign Service oral exam, can you think of any of the questions that you were asked, or the atmosphere when you took it?

JONES: Yes, it's pretty vividly etched in my memory. [laughter] There were three people on the oral panel, I think only one was an active duty officer, Garland Richardson, who

had served in Japan. There was a retired officer and someone else who I think may have been civil service, on the panel. I remember being asked if I smoked and being offered an ashtray, and when I said no, they looked at me very sternly and asked me if I had any other vices. The nearest I came to being caught up, was when I had been going on about the research that I had been doing on West Africa at Fletcher and the Chairman of the panel asked me if I knew what witches broom disease was. I didn't have the faintest idea of what it was but I said that from the context in which we were talking, I would guess that it was a disease of the cacao plant, which turned out to be right. So I got some credit for being a good guesser. The last question was about Mississippi and why race relations were so bad in Mississippi, how would I explain that to a foreigner? I said that one reason was that it was the state in the United States which had the largest percentage of blacks (I probably didn't say blacks at that time) and the other was that it was the poorest state in the United States. So you had the conditions for the most intense competition, economic and political competition, and he seemed very satisfied with that answer and that was it. I was extremely impressed with the written examination, I thought it was the toughest examination I had ever taken.

Q: Was this the three and a half day one?

JONES: This was the one day exam. It was all day, and it was exhaustive and exhausting. I was nervous enough, but I wasn't that impressed with the oral exam. I though the oral exam could have been tougher, maybe in retrospect they had already made up their minds before the oral and it was to some degree proforma.

Q: Did you enter the Foreign Service in 1956?

JONES: Yes.

Q: Can you describe your entering class? The makeup and the outlook and the training?

JONES: I was very lucky because it was a time when they were very anxious to recruit and they were taking in substantial numbers of people. I took the oral exam in April, went through the security clearance process, I graduated from Fletcher in late May or early June, I went home to Texas for a month, and got a phone call asking if I could be in Washington in July. So compared to people who had spent years sitting on the register, I was extremely fortunate. I flew to Washington - first class in those days - on July 4, and reported to the Foreign Service Institute on July 5 - but my entrance-on-duty date was always July 4, which I thought very appropriate. I was one week past my 21st birthday, which was the minimum age for entering the Service. The class, the group we were in was a mixture. There were some brand new people like myself coming in and there was also a group that had apparently taken part of the training previously and then gone off and done something else and now were being brought back. So there was a group of older and more experienced officers who were in with us. We also had an unusual experience in that we, the entire July class, were all assigned to the Department, rather than being sent overseas as most entering classes are, apparently due to a shortage of people in Washington. Then a group of us had an even more unusual experience in that, just after the course was over, there must have been 10 or 12 of us who were sent over to the Passport Office. That was a period of slightly warming relations with the Soviet Union and there was a prospect, somebody thought, that we might be able to get some people out of the Soviet Union who had claims to American citizenship. So it was decided on a crash basis that we had to look at these files and determine how many people and precisely which ones had some claim to American citizenship, these people who had been living in the Soviet Union for years and years. The fastest, easiest, source of bodies was to pull people out of the A-100 course, and a group of us were sent over there for approximately six weeks. So my very first working experience with the State Department was adjudicating citizenship cases.

Q: Did you get any feel for the passport office? Was this Ruth Shipley's period?

JONES: I think it would have been, yes. I didn't get much feel for it. We were together as a group and we pulled the files and then we read them and wrote up our own recommendation on the basis of zero knowledge as to whether this person seemed to have a claim or not, and then passed the files on to somebody who actually knew what they were doing. We had very little real contact, other than being shown the ropes, we had not much contact with the passport office.

Q: Where did you go then?

JONES: I went to the Bureau of Economic Affairs. At that time they had a rotational program and three of us went into that program and the idea was that we would move around to different offices of what was then the E Bureau. It was aimed at addressing the shortage of economists in the Foreign Service. It was somebody's idea that this would force feed the creation of economic officers, that if we had two years of economic experience that might incline some of us to stay in the economic field. In my case it failed, as I suspect it did in every case, except for people who were planning to do economics anyway. [laughter] My first job was working in the commodities division, under a man named Tom Robinson, which was a good experience. Good supervisors, and good people to work with. All of the foreign policy issues relating to commodities, and among other things the PL 480 program, which gave me a lasting fascination with it for my whole career. I still think it was the most ingenious idea that the U.S. Congress has every come up with and unfortunately under-appreciated by the Congress, which has kept cutting it back. I remember a man named Stan Nehmer who was one of the U.S. government's foremost experts on cotton and cotton textiles was in that office and he had me look at a draft piece of legislation that was being proposed in Congress and I actually spotted something that had foreign policy implications in it and that pleased him enormously. Then I went to an office that dealt primarily with AID programs, sort of a liaison between the State Department and AID, an almost totally civil service office. That was a less happy experience, they did not really know what to do with me, or what to expect from a very

young officer. Then I went to the Office of the Press Advisor to the Economic Bureau and I got off to a good start and then the officer who was in charge—I forgot now what happened, he was transferred or he was ill, or something, at any rate he disappeared, and for a period of several months I was there by myself. Which is the kind of thing that only happens in the State Department, I don't think there is any other part of the U.S. government where if you happen to be in the right place at the right time, you are just left there and nobody raises a stink about it and nobody asks if this kid has any capability whatsoever to do this job. [laughter] I remember trudging down to the Department on a Saturday morning after a major snowstorm, we announced a PL 480 agreement with Poland that morning - why on a Saturday I have no idea - and John Hightower of the Associated Press actually asked me a question. He asked someone where he could find someone who could give him some background on this agreement and they pointed at me and he actually asked me a question. Marquis Childs called up on the phone one day and wanted to know the amount the AID we were giving to some country.

Q: These were quite famous newspaper people at the time.

JONES: I had a ball in that job. I was replaced in it by Harry Bergold who was later our Ambassador in Nicaragua. I remember briefing him when he came in. By that point I was able to tell him quite a bit about the press advisor's job. I went from there into language training. I had wanted to go to Africa because as I mentioned, in graduate school I had done some papers on Africa and had gotten quite interested in Africa. I had asked to take French and the Department looked at the fact that in college I had studied Spanish and nothing else and although they had tested me and found out that I had darn little conversational Spanish, they more or less concluded that I had a start at least in that language and so they assigned me to Spanish. Toward the end of the training we got our assignments and I was assigned to Quito, Ecuador.

Q: Were you married at this time?

JONES: No. The first day that I walked into the State Department we were met at the door by Max Krebs, who I guess at that time was running the A-100 course, and I will always remember that he asked a series of questions to everybody who came in and one of them was “Are you married?” and I said “No,” and he looked at me with a very stern expression and he said “Get married, otherwise you'll go overseas and you'll marry some foreigner.” Which is exactly what I did. [laughter]

Q: So when did you go to Ecuador?

JONES: 1958.

Q: You were there from 1958 to when?

JONES: From November 1958 to November 1960. That flight, a Pan American flight from Texas (because I went back to visit my mother and take a few days of leave before going) stopped at every capital in between, Mexico City, San Salvador, Guatemala, Panama - a real milk run. I will always remember looking down and thinking that I'm actually outside of the United States, the land down there is foreign.

Q: Can you describe Ecuador in this 1958 - 1960 period? What was the situation there at the time?

JONES: It was very different—I was just in Ecuador last month, and the Ecuador of 1958 was very different from what it is today. The Embassy was very different. I was stunned and rightly stunned as it turned out when I got off of the plane to find almost the entire Embassy at the airport to meet me. I discovered later that didn't happen at any of my other posts. There was a kind of feeling then that this was a far off, isolated, backwater of the universe kind of place, and that we all had to hang together. So the DCM and everybody else was out there to meet me. The DCM was Ed Little, a very fine man who was later an Ambassador someplace in Africa. The Ambassador was Christian Ravndal, a man very much from the old school. I remember that he had everybody on the American staff to

his residence at Christmas and he read—I can't remember if it was St. Luke, or Dickens, or what, but I remember being cautioned by the Administrative Officer that the last thing that I wanted to do was to be late for that command performance. I was being picked up by another officer and he was late and we both got there late. Fortunately I was able to explain that it was not my fault, but I remember the terror I felt at having done exactly what she had told me not to do. So it was a pretty different kind of Embassy from any Embassy today. And a different country.

Q: What was the political economic situation in Ecuador at that time?

JONES: There was a conservative President, Camilo Ponce Enriquez, and it was a country that had a very turbulent political history, lots of military coups and overthrows. But it seemed at that point to be in a period of stability, temporary as it turned out. The economy very much turned around bananas, this was before oil was discovered. The large landholders were still very politically powerful and the Indians, who were perhaps a quarter of the population were very much out of everything, the economy, politics and everything else. Presidential elections were held in 1960, and again, one of those fortuitous things happened, my boss Tom Rogers, chief of the political section, came down with hepatitis and was out of the office for several months and I was by myself in the political office and got to do almost all of the reporting on the political campaign. It was clear that the Embassy and Washington and most of the elite were hoping that Galo Plaza Lasso would win, he was a large landowner, but one with a social conscience. He was pro-American, somebody that we could easily deal with and get along with. But his opponent was Jose Maria Velasco Ibarra, who was a populist in the great Latin American tradition and it should have been obvious to me, had I had any greater experience or political smarts, that if you had a free vote which you did, that Velasco was going to run all over this aristocrat who hobnobbed with foreign countries. Which is exactly what happened, but I failed to predict it and the message that I wrote on behalf of the Embassy predicting the result was

absolutely wrong. I had my first run in with CIA at that point. I had gone around and talked to all of the political leaders...

Q: You had a position as a political officer?

JONES: Yes. Another one of those fortuitous things, I was supposed to be in a rotational program, and I had spent about nine months in the economic section, and then I went to political and was supposed to rotate next into the Consular Section to stamp visas. But then Tom Rogers got sick and they decided they couldn't rotate me out of there and so I spent the rest of the two years in political. Never got to Consular, I'm one of the few foreign service officers never to have had a consular assignment in my whole career. So I went around and I talked to all of the political leaders and each one said his own party was going to win and that wasn't very helpful. If I were doing it today, I would do it very differently, but at that point I didn't know of anything better to do, I thought I would go around and talk to other people in the Embassy who had been there a lot longer than I had, and had been in the Foreign Service a lot longer than I had, and see what they thought. One of the people I talked to was the station chief and he said that it looked pretty close, about 50 -50 and that Plaza seemed to be gaining. That sort of confirmed what other people were saying and so that's what I wrote. Then in a staff meeting after the election, we were all sitting there stunned at Velasco's unforeseen landslide, and the station chief blandly denied that he had said any such thing. [laughter] That was the first, but not the last time, that I was absolutely furious at an Embassy staff meeting. Ed Little had to shut me up and calm me down.

Q: I might put in for the record that one of the things in a political section of an Embassy, one of the things that you try to do is gain points back in Washington by saying that you called the election correctly. If you don't call it correctly, your other prognostications, or your record is somewhat blotted. How about the Ambassador?

JONES: I always thought —I guess starting from that experience, that that is actually a very bad standard. The only way to tell what the likely outcome of an honest election is, is if you have a good reliable polling service, and not always then, as 1948 proved in the United States. Back at that time there was no such thing in Ecuador, there were no polls of any kind. It's either extremely easy for an Embassy because it tells Washington what the local polls are saying, or else it's extremely difficult, like reading entrails — how is an Embassy supposed to know how voters in a foreign country are going to vote. In Chile in 1988, where we had far better contacts and sources of information than we had in Ecuador in 1960, polls were not permitted by the dictatorship, and we had no idea how the plebiscite would go.

Q: Was Ravndal the Ambassador the whole time you were there?

JONES: He was there almost the whole time. I think about a month before I left, Maurice Bernbaum came in.

Q: How did Ravndal operate?

JONES: Ravndal was very much old school, very formal, and distant from his staff. He was on Mount Olympus and the only direct human contact was with the DCM. The DCM is often the bridge in an Embassy, even today, between the Ambassador and the rest of the staff.

Q: What about the Ecuadorian society, we're talking about in the 1950's and these things have changed, (I never served in Latin America) but one of the criticisms laid on, in many areas of the world is, an Embassy tends to associate with the ruling class and gets absorbed in that and often isn't very sensitive to what else is happening. You were the new boy on the block, how did you observe the Embassy, its contacts and where it stood in the society?

JONES: I've always felt that accusation was unfair. The places where I was, my whole career, the Embassy was doing its damnedest to have as wide a circle of contacts as it possibly could. I was never told in my entire career — with one single exception, there was a period when you were warned not have any contact with the local communist party, there was a belief, rightly or wrongly, that if the U.S. Embassy had any contact with the communist party it would lend it prestige and credibility that we didn't want it to have. With that one exception I never ran into any effort to limit contact with the opposition or to limit contact to one level of people or whatever. I think part of the reason that gets said is that people don't understand that it's the primary function of an Embassy to have a relationship with the people who are in power. The thing that you've got to do first, your top priority is to have frequent and close contact with the government and the people who are behind the government and who may influence the government. Because they are the only people who can decide things the way you want them to go. But as I said, every Embassy I ever served in, also tried to have contact with youth, with labor, with journalists, with every other sector of society.

Q: What about with the Indians? You said that they had about a quarter of the population, I would think that this would have been a difficult group to make contact with. For one thing were they out in the forest?

JONES: In the interior of the country yes, largely. Although we also saw many Indians in the streets of Quito as well. It's true, we had very little relationship with the Indians. There was nobody in the Embassy who could speak any of the Indian languages and in defense of that, precisely because they had no role in the system, no influence on the system, it was a very low priority for us. Now today, particularly in this last election that took place this year, there is a block of Indian members of Congress. There was even talk of electing one of them as president of the Congress, which is an extraordinary development. So if I were in the Embassy in Quito today, having contact with representatives of the Indian

movement and knowing what they were thinking and saying would certainly be a priority for the Embassy.

Q: How did you find moving within the Ecuadorian society? I notice that your wife is from Ecuador, so I assume that there was at least a contact there. [laughter] How did you find things to be at the social level for a young officer?

JONES: Easy to do. Ecuadorians are very friendly, open people. Latins in general are, with a few exceptions. I found them extremely hospitable toward a young American. You gradually learned that there were ways of doing things. One of the interesting things about a foreign language is it's not just that you translate a phrase into another language, but the way things are said and the way things are put, reflect the whole culture and a way of looking at the world. So along with learning Spanish I also learned something about the way people relate to each other in a Latin culture. Like every culture it's different, it's unique, and it has unique characteristics. I enjoyed it. One reason that I kept going back to Latin America is that I liked the area and I liked the people. I liked the fact that you could go to another Latin country and although there were significant differences from one to another, it was also very familiar because the cultural background was there. It wasn't like going to a totally strange country, there was a large element of familiarity every time you changed posts.

Q: How were Americans perceived in Ecuador? We had early on, but not too far away, a real dust up in Bogota, when Marshall was there—Nixon came through and had a very difficult time. This was not a completely tranquil time and Ecuador was not Colombia, but it is still up in that area. How was it?

JONES: Nixon had been through Quito on that same trip, that was before I got there. As I recall Quito was one of the places where it went better for him than it had elsewhere. When I was in Chile years later, a couple of friends and contacts of mine published a book called Chile and the United States - Una Relacion Esquiva and both I and my Chilean

friends spent some time debating exactly what the best translation of the word Esquiva was, but we came down with ambiguous as the closest to it, an ambiguous relationship. I would say that's not just true of Chile, but of Latin America in general. There is a strong sense, which has grown in the time that I've been familiar with it, that the United States is the most important country for Latin America. It didn't used to be.

Q: It used to be very European oriented.

JONES: I remember when Douglas Dillon came down after Velasco Ibarra was elected President, I was asked to go to their lunch and sit behind them and be available as an interpreter. It turned out that they didn't need an interpreter because they could both speak in French. For any Latin American of Velasco Ibarra's generation, knowing French was the natural and expected thing to do. The whole cultural outlook and sense of affinity was toward Europe. And a lot of the economic relationship, certainly before World War II, was overwhelmingly with Europe. It only changed with the destruction of the European economy during the war. That has gradually faded, the overwhelming choice of language, of place to study, now for Latin Americans is the United States. The overwhelming number one trade partner is the United States. For a lot of Latins in the nearer countries, those with a lot of money or even not so much, THE place to shop is Miami. Q: At the time we're talking about it was still in the transitional period?

JONES: Oh yes, still in a transitional state. But think even then there was an awareness that the United States was a very important country for Ecuador and good relations with the United States were important. But they didn't like a lot of things about us. As I've been suggesting, a lot of the relationship was unavoidable, was essential, they had to trade with the United States because the economy of Europe was destroyed and the United States is closer. Anything you have to do that you don't have any choice about, you tend not to be very happy about. There was a lot of unhappiness with the lack of choice in the relationship with the United States. Of course this was particularly felt on the left. There were people on the right who were unhappy about it too, for somewhat different reasons.

The left didn't like the United States policy, its economy, and saw correctly that U.S. influence was exporting our political system, our economy, and that with every day that passed they would have less choice about being carbon copies of the United States, as they saw it. So there was certainly resentment. I felt very little of that in a personal sense. I think that's maybe one thing that I liked about Latin America, obviously there are some exceptions, but with most Latins, they can be violently opposed to your policies and make a furious speech about the United States and then sit down and have a very courteous conversation with you. The tradition of manners that you must have in dealing with another person, and that you can have a warm and friendly relationship even with an opponent, is dominant. It always has been I think.

Q: Did the U.S. guarantee of the Peruvian/Ecuadorian border, which keeps coming up and began back in the early 1940's I think in order to keep the two from squabbling with each other, we acted as a guarantor and it has come back to haunt us again and again. Did that come up at all while you were there?

JONES: I spent a good chunk of my career working on border disputes. Because Latin America is full of them. Ecuador/Peru, Venezuela/Guyana (twice from both sides of the border) and Guatemala/Belize. That's a good illustration of the ambiguity. There certainly were lots of Ecuadorians—every Ecuadorian bitterly resents the loss of land to Peru. Peru was the aggressor, there is absolutely no historical question about that, and it got to keep the fruits of its aggression. The treaty of Rio de Janeiro ratified its gains and a lot of pressure was put on the Ecuadorian government to sign the treaty because we were just getting involved in World War II and we didn't want problems on our southern front. Informed Ecuadorians were aware of that and resented the U.S. role but at the same time they also knew that if anything was ever going to be done about it, if there was ever to be any modification of the treaty, any rectification of the wrongs, they would have to have the United States on board in order to do it. It really wasn't possible for them to be antagonistic to the United States over the border issue because what they had to be was persuasive. The open hostility was mainly toward Peru and in the fifty years since there have been

repeated border incidents between Ecuador and Peru and the United States as one of the guarantor countries of the Rio Treaty has had to become involved in every single one of them.

Q: Any fishing problems in those days? Tuna wars, or was this later on?

JONES: I don't think so, not that I recall during the period that I was there. The main events of that period were the border situation which was perpetually threatening to heat up, and the lead-up to the elections in 1960. There was supposed to have been an Inter-American conference of the OAS in Quito in 1960 which got called off. I can't remember now why it was called off—maybe due to the border problem, it seems to me that Peru was threatening not to attend if it was held in Quito. They built a new building to host the conference which never occurred.

Q: Did you meet your wife on this tour, or did you meet her later on?

JONES: Yes, I met her on this tour. I met her not long after I arrived in 1958 and we dated and we got married in April 1960.

Q: Did you have a problems marrying a foreign national at that time?

JONES: Oh yes—not any problems really. At that time you still had to go through the formality of submitting a resignation, a written, formal resignation. Then the Department considered it and considered your future spouse and decided whether or not it would reject the resignation, which I'm happy to say it did.

Q: You left there in November 1960?

JONES: Yes, we took a Grace Line ship back to the United States. My one and only shipboard travel at the U.S. government's expense. The Grace Line was still operating what were largely banana boats from the west coast of South America, to the States. They had room on them for a few passengers, about a dozen. We took a ship from Guayaquil

to New York. It was a fun experience, even in spite of getting seasick, and my wife was pregnant at the time, so that didn't make it any easier on her. The food was great. Going through the Panama Canal was fascinating.

Q: Where were you assigned when you left Ecuador?

JONES: I still had the Africa “bug”. I still wanted to get to Africa. I warned my wife that if she married me, that was what I was going to try to do. The assignment came through and I was told that if I wanted to go to Africa, the only opening was as General Services Officer in Accra, Ghana. This of course was back before the days of open assignments and so I had to take the Department's word for it that this was the only opening. So it was either take what they offered or give up on Africa. So off we went to Ghana, in February 1961.

Q: You were there from 1961 to when?

JONES: Until February 1963, two years. Ghana was an interesting country, I'm glad I went there. The general services work was certainly different. If nothing else, it gave me sympathy for Administrative Officers and GSO's that I would not otherwise have had. The impatience of people with administrative support and their concept of the level of support to which they are entitled were a revelation to me. [laughter] It was not the work I would have chosen, and I certainly wouldn't have chosen to have done it again, but it was survivable for two years. It really was a learning experience.

Q: Who was the Ambassador at that time?

JONES: When I first got there it was a career officer named Russell, I think. But he was not there for very long before we got a political appointee. Kennedy was coming in as President and named a democrat named Mahoney as Ambassador, he was from Arizona or New Mexico. The thing that most impacted on me as GSO, was that we were informed that he was coming with seven children. He was a young man, couldn't have been more than in his forties. The little residence that we had in Accra was in no way equipped to

house a family of nine. So a major project for General Services was renovations and expansion. I don't know exactly what we did, but somehow additional space was added to the house. I will say this, the Ambassador was a very nice guy, and very interested in making the very best of impressions. He never complained, we never had any difficulty in dealing with the Ambassador. We had a lot more difficulty with the people lower down the food chain, than we did with him.

Q: This was the Kwame Nkrumah period, Nkrumah was...

JONES: Yes. I'll never forget, once the Ambassador very solemnly in a staff meeting said that he understood that there were some members of the American community—one of Nkrumah's title's of which he was most fond, was “Osaygefo”, which I was told meant roughly the redeemer, and the Ambassador announced that he understood that there were some people and some younger members of the American community who had been heard referring to him as “old soggy shoes,” and he wanted people to know that we had diplomatic relations with the government Ghana and this was improper conduct. [laughter]

Q: This was the time when the Kennedy administration was in, this was the time of our greatest interest in Africa, and Nkrumah was sort of the leader in Africa that people were looking at. What was your impression—was the Embassy sort of starry-eyed about Nkrumah did you think? What was your impression?

JONES: At that time they were not starry-eyed about him, I've forgotten exactly the period his administration was, but already they were worried about him. It was already clear that he was taking Ghana in directions that we were unhappy about, both politically and economically. He was moving in the direction of a one-man dictatorship, and slowly squeezing the capitalist side of the economy until it expired. But these trends had not fully developed yet, it was more a constant concern than it was a feeling that the war had already been lost. As you said, this was kind of at the peak of the Kennedy administration's approach, that we want to be on the side of the developing countries. Chester Bowles

and John Galbraith were sent out to India and the whole object was to have the very best relations with the developing countries, not to nit-pick at them. One of my interesting experiences was the arrival of the very first Peace Corps volunteers, anywhere in the world, to Ghana. I was there at the airport when they came in. My role was to get their baggage off of the plane [laughter] and get it to the Embassy. Nevertheless I was there at that interesting moment.

Q: What was your impression of how the Peace Corps fit in? There was the episode of the post card, was that while you were there? Somebody wrote a post card which was considered to be disparaging of something, I can't remember what it was.

JONES: I don't remember that happening during the time I was there.

Q: Maybe it came a little later, I think it was Ghana but I may be wrong.

JONES: There were lots of such incidents around the world with Peace Corps volunteers. My impression is that was more true during the 1960's and 1970's than it is today. Whether they are using a different selection process today or whether the younger generation has matured, but there seems to be a greater awareness now of the fact that they can't raise waves in the local society or they'll soon be back on the plane headed home.

Q: The General Services Officer is often the person in the Embassy who has to deal with the local economy, problems of corruption, ability to compete jobs, etc. What was your impression of how the system worked in Ghana?

JONES: Our most familiar experience was being victims of extortion by landlords. My major preoccupation was with housing, finding housing for people. It made me a life-long enemy of government-provided housing. My experience has always been that it is easier and works much better if you let people go out and lease their own quarters. Then they can put up with the consequences of their own decisions. Ghana was a totally government-owned and government-leased post, which meant that me, the poor GSO,

was responsible for finding everyone their ideal dream house. And if it wasn't available on the local market or available within the guidelines set down by the Department for what we could pay, then it was personally my fault. I needed to look a little harder or work a little harder. Certainly the landlords—they knew it was a tight housing market and that European style and American style housing was hard to find, and we paid enormous rents (it seemed to me at that time) for housing that was not all that good. I don't think we ever had any problem with running into fraud or corruption.

Q: When did you leave there?

JONES: In 1963.

Q: Where did you go then?

JONES: As always, a brief vacation in the States, during which I came down with hepatitis. I fascinated my doctor in Austin, he hadn't seen many cases and he was just enchanted with the chance to treat a case. [laughter] In the summer of 1963, I went to Caracas, Venezuela as Political Officer. There were actually, counting the labor attach#, four regular officers in the political section and then there was a rotating intern, and I was the junior of the four regular officers.

Q: You were in Caracas from when to when?

JONES: From June 1963 to June 1966.

Q: Who was the Ambassador?

JONES: When I first got there it was Allan Stewart who spent most of his life as a journalist. He was not exactly a political appointee, I think he had laterally entered the Foreign Service in some way, but by profession he was really a newsman. He was a terrific guy and got along very well with Romulo Betancourt who was then the President. I think I was under Stewart for a year and then he was replaced by Maurice Bernbaum

who I had served under briefly in Ecuador. Bernbaum was a 100% career professional diplomat. He was very good at his job. It was a very interesting period because the Perez Jimenez dictatorship had been overthrown at the beginning of 1958, and Betancourt had been elected in December 1958, so it was just coming to the end of his administration and then Raul Leoni was elected in December 1963. Betancourt was one of the great political leaders of Latin America, and someone who deserves a lot of credit for both leading the opposition to the dictatorship and for helping lead his country back to democracy afterwards. He served two terms as President and founded the Accion Democratica party, which is now somewhat tattered, but was then one of the bright, shining lights among the political parties of Latin America, a moderate social democratic party which gave some real hope of change in Latin America.

Q: As a political officer, how did you get out and around?

JONES: I always found it extremely easy to make friends and contacts in Latin America. It was more of a problem finding time to see and talk to all of the people that you wanted to see and talk to. There was no problem with access, there was a problem with time. The language certainly helped, I think being an American diplomat also helped. Doors tended to be open to someone representing the United States, because of who and what the United States is. I had a lot of fun being a political officer in Venezuela. The politics were interesting, it was a hopeful era, and there was a feeling that we were witnessing the settling of the bases of democracy, which we were. It didn't turn out to be 100% successful, but I guess it never does.

Q: Were there any issues that the Embassy and you concentrated on in the normal relationship between Venezuela and the United States?

JONES: Well, certainly from the perspective of Washington, the overwhelmingly important issue was the communist threat. There was a guerrilla movement out in the mountains and this was the period when interest and focus on guerrilla movements was at its height.

The question of whether it was possible, after China and Malaysia, to defeat a guerrilla movement and if so, how, was of tremendous interest to foreign policy professionals and scholars and soldiers and observers. The guerrilla struggle was mostly out in the remote interior, but there was also some urban terrorism that was taking place. The only time I ever got shot at in my life was when the Embassy was shot at one day. I was in the Embassy but fortunately not in my own office and when the sniper fire began we were discouraged from going back to our offices, but after it was all over and we did go back, I found a bullet hole in the wall, not too far from where my head would have been had I been sitting at my desk. So I was happy I wasn't. This was also the time when the Cubans landed some people and some arms on the coast of Venezuela, and the boat was found and this was the primary piece of evidence in expelling Cuba from the OAS, for the attempt it was making to subvert Venezuelan democracy. It was an interesting time.

Q: Did you as a political officer, and the people you talked to, find that the Venezuelans were supportive of the United States? In Latin America at that point, our main thing was sort of against Cuba. We had already had the missile crisis, that was in 1962, that sort of thing. How did you find the reaction towards the U.S.?

JONES: There were certainly those who disagreed with U.S. policy and there were some who wanted a softer line toward Cuba. But there weren't many among the political leadership in Venezuela, which was a product of several things. Number one was the fact that they had a very obvious communist attempt to subvert their system going on all of the time, so it was hard to be a sympathizer with that. It was hard to sympathize with Cuba when it's landing arms on your coast to help overthrow the democratically-elected government.

Secondly, the AD Party had its experience with the communists back in the 1930's and 1940's. Betancourt and the other leaders of the party—there was a time when they were allied with the communists, or working with the communists against the dictatorships in Venezuela, but he realized that their ultimate objectives were different and broke with

them. And as a consequence he and his colleagues in AD were vaccinated against communism in a way that other political leaders elsewhere in Latin America who hadn't had that experience were not. The other major party, the Social Christians, COPEI, came out of conservative Catholic roots, so with neither of the major parties did we have any real problem on the issue of dealing with communism.

The third factor was the fact that the U.S. was so clearly supporting the return of democracy in Venezuela. There was a visit by Robert Kennedy while I was there that drew just huge crowds. There's an adulation for the Kennedys in Latin America, still today, which I don't think any American really understands. They struck a chord in Latin America, they did here too of course, but it went deeper and lasted longer than it did here. Part of that was because of the Kennedy administration's policies toward Latin America, support for democracy, the Alliance for Progress, and that built a warmth of relations with the United States that put us in good standing for years to come.

Q: Did oil politics intrude at all into the political field where you were dealing?

JONES: Oil has always been (since 1917 when it was discovered in Venezuela) a major component of our relations with Venezuela. It's the only Embassy that I ever served in that had a petroleum attach# and he was a very key officer. At the time I was there, it was a relatively quiet issue. Later on the Venezuelans nationalized the major American companies and obviously at the time that was going on it was a much hotter issue. It was certainly an issue, there were issues like the debates over how much foreign oil should be admitted into the United States, debates in the United States over that and debates in Venezuela over why they should be dependent on the U.S. market, whether they should try to diversify their buyers, and certainly it was an issue in dealing with the political leaders, especially the young political leaders, who would ask the young officers in the Embassy, are the foreign companies exploiting Venezuela, are there huge profits being made, are we getting paid our fair share for the oil, etc. Those were constant themes.

Q: As political officer you're always concerned about what the media is saying, what was your impression of the press, the radio, and the T.V.,in Venezuela at the time that you were there? Particularly from our perspective?

JONES: I didn't have much to do with the media at that stage in my career, I did later on. The local media of course, is extremely important to any political officer. I remember once in Caracas we had a group of Peace Corps volunteers over to our house and we were sitting around talking and one of them asked me where I got the information that I used in political reporting and I told him from the newspapers. He clearly did not believe me, he thought I had super secret inside sources. The newspaper is what any political officer starts with first thing in the morning. In any country, they almost never tell you 100% of the truth, or 100% of what is going on. But there is almost nothing that happens that doesn't show up in the papers in some form, there is a hint at least that something is going on. Which alerts you to the fact that you need to go and talk to Joe Blow in party X who can tell you more about what the newspapers are hinting at. It's often much more than that if the press is any good, and by in large in Venezuela it was, then you get a tremendous amount of information from the local press.

Q: The United States during this period was undergoing a lot of racial tension. This was the height of the civil rights movement, and the activity there. How did this play in Venezuela? Did they pay much attention to what we were trying to do?

JONES: It was one of the standard issues that would get brought up, especially by anyone a little to the left of the spectrum, race relations in the United States and why do you have such an appalling record on them? As a representative of the United States, you spent a lot of time defending your country, defending things that the U.S. government does, things the U.S. government says, the positions it takes, but also the more fundamental things about the society, defending them and trying to explain them. I don't remember particularly —I think if I had been working as a political officer in Africa I would have gotten a lot more of that. Not as much of that in Latin America. When you did get it in Latin America—

particularly if you were talking with someone in the upper class, the people that held power in the society, you were often conscious of how hypocritical that was, because most of these countries have severe racial problems themselves. They are very, very, reluctant to admit it. It is always something that occurs in the United States, but it doesn't occur in their country.

Q: Did Mexico play any role? Because Venezuela is a Caribbean country, with Mexico often setting itself off in opposition on many things to the United States, did you find that Venezuela ever looked to Mexico?

JONES: At that time the idea of alliances between political parties in Latin America was a very hot topic. AD was a member of the Socialist International and there were a lot of personal relationships that had been forged during the period when many of the political leaders of Latin America were in exile, between like-minded people, social democrats, the Venezuelans, Luis Mu#oz Marin in Puerto Rico, and Jose Figueres in Costa Rica, and the PRI in Mexico to some extent was part of that. The alliances between the like-minded social democrats of these countries, on the one hand. And on the other, the Christian Democrats were just coming to be known and recognized in Latin America. The Christian Democratic party in Venezuela had established itself as the leading opposition party. It was clear that it might someday come to power, as in fact it later did in Venezuela. It had ties with the Christian Democrats in Chile and there were other Christian Democratic movements in Latin America that looked like someday they might come to power and they had links with the Christian Democrats in Europe. We did some reporting on those links. But Mexico for one thing, has never had much of a diplomatic service. I hope my friends in the Mexican diplomatic service will forgive my saying that. The premier diplomatic service in Latin America is today and always has been the Brazilian.

Q: I've heard that. It's been used as a model for our own foreign service sometimes.

JONES: It's a very aristocratic and upper class service. They know their business and it's a real career. They are trained and brought along during their careers. The Brazilian diplomat anywhere, certainly in Latin America and I suspect around the world is always—if you want to find a fellow diplomat who is well informed, you can count on the Brazilians. More I think, than almost any other country. So the Brazilians are influential throughout Latin America simply because of the quality of their people and the amount of work they put into it.When we were in Chile, the Argentine Embassy had a very strong interest in Chile. They were very effective and very knowledgeable while we were there. The Mexicans have very good people in Washington, but they just don't have much of a presence or an influence in South America—I guess another way to put it is that they didn't have much of an interest—they haven't recognized that they have much of an interest, certainly south of Panama. In Central America they do recognize they have an interest and have pursued a more activist stance. Although I don't think they have been terribly effective in Central America.

Q: What about the Catholic church in Venezuela during this period? Was this a point of contact, of interest, or did it play much of a role?

JONES: The church is very important in Latin America as a whole. I'm trying to remember if it had any particular role in Venezuela. I don't at the moment remember. I remember that we looked at that and tried to develop some information on the role of the church without much success. It did not seem to be playing much of a role there.

Q: Did you get involved with labor in Venezuela? How was this handled?

JONES: We had a full time labor attach#, and in Venezuela, as we had in Ecuador. I never did a lot of labor reporting. Some of the labor leaders in Venezuela were also major political leaders. The AD Party had very powerful labor roots. So to that extent I was involved with the labor movement, but not much beyond that.

Q: So you left Venezuela in 1966, and where did you go then?

JONES: I had applied for a year at a university. The policy at that time was after you had two overseas tours in the same geographic area you could apply for university studies in that area. Since I had had two tours in Latin America, I applied for Latin American studies. I was given a list to chose from and I asked for Stanford, and I got Stanford. So we went off to live in California for a year.

Q: We'll stop for now and pick up here.

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Today is August 19, 1996. George, when were you at Stanford?

JONES: 1966 to 1967.

Q: Could you talk a little bit about what you were taking and what you were getting out of this academic time?

JONES: I enjoyed it very much. I think it was a very good break from the career. I think it was hard on my family, we had three small children at that point. The youngest was just a year old. We had to pick up and move all of our furniture and clothing, everything, from Venezuela to California and then a year later from California to Washington. It was a year in which my family didn't see a lot of me because I was studying a lot of the time. But it was a very rewarding year. Stanford had exactly the kind of program I wanted to be in, which was an inter-disciplinary Latin American studies program that was not run out of any department, but run separately. It even had its own building called Bolivar House, where the people in the program met once a week for a core seminar. John Johnson ran the program, he was a person that I had not known previously, but came to admire greatly. I think his work on the middle class and the military in Latin America broke important ground, and his reputation still stands in Latin American studies. I also had the opportunity

—although I didn't work with him in course work, I got to know Tom Bailey, the diplomatic historian.

Q: Yes, Thomas Bailey whose book was one of the two major histories...

JONES: Right, and he was working on a new book at that point, The Art of Diplomacy, and when he found out that I was in the Foreign Service he asked me to read it and make comments on it. I remember that he took every suggestion that I made, except for one. I noted that he kept saying former Ambassador all the way through it, and I told him that we in the service liked to think that there wasn't such a thing as a former Ambassador, you were always an Ambassador. But he didn't buy that. [laughter]

Q: This of course was the Johnson era, and we were getting more and more involved in Vietnam, but there was still the emphasis in Latin America on the Alliance of Progress. How was the Alliance of Progress and how were things going in Latin America as far as government policy was concerned, viewed from the academic perspective?

JONES: The student body was certainly absorbed with Vietnam and that was the foreign policy issue. I participated in a debate on it in which I had very few sympathizers. In fact, I recall being taken aback by the degree of far left sentiment on campus. Not that it was a majority sentiment by any means, but it was a little strange to find it at all, coming out of an Embassy environment where there hadn't been any. I suppose I was out of touch, and it was good that I was having this re-exposure to American society, because I was surprised that there were people who were very sympathetic to the Viet Cong and wanted their cause to triumph. There was even a student in our Latin American program who really wanted the far left to triumph in Latin America. That took some getting used to, moving from a 100% patriotic environment to one in which there were no holds barred.

At that point there was not yet the questioning of the Alliance of Progress as such. I think interestingly, I ran into the real questioning of the Alliance of Progress a couple of years later back in Washington when a group of FSO's got together and started talking about

Latin American policy, and began to really question how we were approaching foreign aid. During the year I was at Stanford, there was skepticism about American intentions and the reality of the Soviet threat, and foreshadowings of what was to come later, skepticism of the truth of what was said to them by their government. I remember in one class, in fact it was under Dr. Johnson, that there was a textbook which had a footnote in it about a U.S. military base having been built in Venezuela and I was first of all outraged that a supposedly serious scholar could have printed such a footnote which he sourced to some Latin American publication, without ever checking it. It was obviously untrue, no such base had ever existed. I was equally upset that the professor wasn't disposed as a result of this to toss the book out the window. [laughter] Which was my instinct, if the guy had so little scholarly credentials as that, then why use his book at all. Irving Horowitz was the author. I remember also horrifying Johnson once when we were talking about FBIS and he had apparently never realized that FBIS was a subsidiary of the CIA. Of course he like most professors relied heavily on FBIS reports for sources of news of what was going on overseas. [laughter] He was horrified to discover that here he was using a CIA publication.

It was interesting to step back from the day to day pressures of covering foreign political situations and doing reporting telegrams, to look at intellectual concepts of how countries develop and how their politics is organized. During that period I read Charles Anderson's book in which he puts forth the concept of power contenders—that there are labor unions, and political parties, and there is the military and there is the church and there are all of these other groups who are competing for power and they demonstrate their power in various ways. I found that immediately connected with my foreign service experience and I realized that he was exactly right, this is exactly the way it works and that was a very useful way to think about it .

Q: Did Cuba come up? Was Cuba an issue?

JONES: Yes, it came up but it was overshadowed by Vietnam at that point. It wasn't that much of an issue.

Q: Were you being used sort of, with the professors like Johnson saying, "Now let's hear from our State Department representative"? Was it perfectly natural being used as a source to the students so that they would get a slightly different perspective?

JONES: No, not much. There was the occasional small opportunity, but it was mainly what I sought out myself rather than something that anyone else organized. I audited a course in political anthropology (I audited as many things as I could) and the professor got off onto how few Foreign Service Officers could speak Thai (his specialty was Thailand) . So although I was an auditor, I couldn't resist putting up my hand and launching a counter-attack and an explanation of what the Foreign Service was about. Nobody really made any attempt to use me. They had Foreign Service Officers every year, it was a big university. In fact, Marshall Brement was there the year I was, in Soviet studies. So as far as the faculty was concerned we were not an exotic resource, we were just another student.

Q: What was your attitude toward the academic world as far as your later work was concerned? "It was interesting and I got what I wanted out of it, but most of these guys really don't understand the situation and they are up in the clouds." Or else, yes there are things here that one should do and to mine them for what you can. How did feel about that?

JONES: I came away feeling that the academic community certainly had things to teach us, I didn't feel it was a wasted year at all. I think the work that Johnson did and books like Charles Anderson's, and there were others, who had very useful ways of conceptualizing what was going on. In the Foreign Service you don't spend a lot of time thinking about long term trends, the rise of the middle class, and that kind of thing. Because we're required to spend so much of our time focusing on the day to day events, today's crisis, this happened to day, it's got to be reported right away. We do big conceptual reports, a lot of which are not very good because again, the writer's time frame is very short. Somebody is in the country for two or three years and then they go on to someplace else quite different. We acquire a lot of very specific knowledge very quickly. During the time we're there I think

there is nobody to beat us, I think we have the best Foreign Service in the world, I don't think there is anybody who can beat us as a source of specific information. If you want to know who the key leaders are politically or economically at any given moment in country X, there is no better source for that information than the U.S. Embassy. They can tell you how they relate to one another and how they interplay and what the probabilities are for their success over the next couple of years, and that kind of thing. But a longer term analysis is not often done very well from the field.

Q: You left there in 1967 and came back to Washington, is that right?

JONES: Yes.

Q: Where did you serve?

JONES: I went to the Venezuelan desk, in fact just days before I was due to leave Caracas I was told my year at Stanford might be canceled - an old Foreign Service story - because I was needed on the desk. But they worked something out and agreed to wait a year for me. So I took up the job in the summer of 1967.

Q: You were on the desk from when to when?

JONES: From 1967 to 1969. And then shifted to the Colombian desk from 1969 to 1971.

Q: How did the 1967 to 1969 period—this was basically the Johnson time—what were your main duties and concerns during this time?

JONES: I remember that I had barely arrived and one of the first things that hit was the Caracas earthquake in which the Embassy came close to losing some lives. We didn't lose any American lives, but we were told the entire political section had been standing on the balcony of an apartment of one of the high-rise buildings near the Embassy and the balcony damn near came off the building. [laughter] They could have lost them all at once. Oil was always an issue in dealing with Venezuela, there were always issues

and problems related to the treatment of American oil companies in Venezuela, and to the production of Venezuelan oil and its export to the United States. There was a very intense debate at that time about American dependence on foreign oil, whether it was too much and therefore we were setting ourselves up to be pushed around by the foreigners who controlled our oil supply - as of course happened a decade later, but not by the Venezuelans. Or on the other had that we were producing too much oil in the United States, and depleting our own supply of oil at a higher cost to the U.S. consumer, and if we could get cheaper oil from overseas, why not? So any discussion about a quota or a tariff on imports of oil was a big issue. Venezuela was always trying to get itself accepted as the reliable supplier, that if we had these concerns we might have them about places in the Middle East, but we shouldn't have them about Venezuela which was right next door. They didn't make that argument publicly, because it didn't play too well in Venezuela, but they would make it privately in conversations with us.

The guerrilla situation, the far left threat in Venezuela continued to be an issue and I got to know the scholars of the guerrilla movements of the world, people from Rand Corporation and so on, who would drop in every so often to get updated on the insurgency in Venezuela. Which in fact was beginning to fade and eventually disappeared altogether when the communists decided to run for Congress. A couple of the leaders are sitting in the Venezuela Congress today.

Q: I know from time to time that Venezuela gets annoyed because they claim that we give preferential treatment to Canadian oil over Venezuelan oil, or something. Was this an issue at that time or not?

JONES: I don't recall that Canada vs. Venezuela was a particular issue. It was more the issue of whether there should be a limitation on foreign imports, generally. And whether there was an exemption in there for Canada or not, I've forgotten.

Q: Did you deal with the American oil interests dealing with Venezuela? Did they play in any role—as the desk operation went?

JONES: Yes, we certainly did deal with the oil companies. But this was prior to the nationalizations, so there were no huge issues between the companies and Venezuela. Just a constant flow of minor things.

Q: How did we view the Venezuelan government at the time?

JONES: The Venezuelan government at that point was still very high in our eyes, and relations continued to be very good with Venezuela. At that point it had not yet developed the series of major internal problems that it has today. It was still a model of what we would now call a new or restored democracy. Democracy had been restored in 1958. Leoni was elected in 1963 and then in 1968 Rafael Caldera was elected for the first time, so you had the turnover, the final test of democracy, when the government party turns power over to the opposition party. In 1968, the Christian Democrats came into power in Venezuela and the Christian Democrats were also in power in Chile and so that was the peak of what looked like a new wave of Christian Democratic parties coming into power in Latin America, as they had for years in Europe. It didn't turn out that way, because politics in Latin America —surprise, surprise — didn't work the way it did in Europe. We had a lot of work on the desk that related to establishing relations with the new government, the Venezuelan Ambassador, the new officials of the government. Some people that I had known when I was in Venezuela came to Washington. That was a very interesting thing to observe.

Q: From your perspective, how effective did you find the Venezuelan foreign service? The Ambassador and the Embassy as far as when issues came up, did they know how to work Congress and the State Department?

JONES: I think they were learning to in that period. The Venezuelans had, comparatively speaking, in the Latin American context, lots of money and so they could entertain. The Venezuelan Ambassador entertained frequently and lavishly and had all kinds of well-known people to his house. I think they did a reasonably good job. I think it is really much easier for us to go into a Latin country and find out what's going on and acquire a base of knowledge and make friends and so on. If the countries are smaller the United States carries immense prestige. A foreign country coming here is faced with this huge country, much, much bigger than the one they represent. The size of the bureaucracy alone is daunting. Ma foreign diplomats come with the mind set that their relations are with the State Department and the White House and it takes them a little while to find out that 1) they never see the inside of the White House after presenting their credentials (the very lucky ones once a year might get to see the National Security Advisor), and 2) they find out that on many issues the State Department is irrelevant. The real decisions that affect them are being made by Interior, or Commerce, or Agriculture, or somewhere else. They have to learn about those completely separate bureaucracies. It is much more difficult for the foreign diplomat. I think the Venezuelans did reasonably well at it.

Q: The role of arms sales, did you get involved in this? Arms sales in Latin America have always been an issue.

JONES: I got involved a lot in that later. That was a major part of my job at a later stage. Venezuela and Colombia were both democracies and they were both viewed as very friendly countries, good allies of the United States. There were no problems on the Hill or anywhere else about giving them military assistance, or making sales to them. There was a problem later on with regards to the Venezuelans' desire to acquire the very latest fighter aircraft, but I was dealing with that after I left the desk.

Q: You were there up until the end of the Johnson administration and obviously Vietnam was THE focus of the administration at that time. Were we trying to bring Venezuela more onto the South Vietnamese side or not? Was this an issue, from your perspective?

JONES: It didn't affect my work day, it didn't affect the relations with Venezuela. Yes, of course we were seeking Venezuelan support (everybody's support) for our position in Vietnam, but it didn't affect relations with Venezuela at all. We certainly got into it after the work day. This was the period when the Open Forum first got started.

Q: You're talking about the State Department?

JONES: Yes, in the State Department. The protests about our intervention in Vietnam were just getting started in the Foreign Service. When the Open Forum first got started, Bill Luers, among others, suggested we have a subsidiary or affiliate in each bureau. So I tried to get an open forum started in the Latin American Bureau.

Q: Could you explain what an open forum was?

JONES: The idea originally was that it would be a forum for discussion of foreign policy issues, if necessary on a classified basis. In addition to bringing in speakers and panel discussions, it started publishing a magazine that was at least in part classified, to allow discussion of foreign policy issues within house, in an informal way, without access to it by the press and outsiders. It was a reaction to the pressures that were inside, that people wanted to express their feelings about Vietnam and other issues, but they didn't want to break with the Department. After the Cambodia bombing a petition to the Secretary was circulated, supposedly as a purely internal thing, but it was clear to me that it was going to become public and I and a lot of other people had to decide if we were going to associate ourselves with it. I did not sign it because I thought that it was wrong to criticize U.S. policy in a way that was sure to become public. If you felt that way about it then you ought to resign, and then criticize all you want on the outside. But there was a group of us who

sent forward a very critical memo, I think it was in the Open Forum context, a classified channel, which we did not publicize and which did not leak. That got us a meeting with Secretary Rogers. A group of eight or ten of us were selected by some means from among the signers to attend this meeting—it was the first time that I had met with any Secretary of State, in any capacity other than as a note taker when he met with some visiting dignitary. It was certainly an interesting experience. There was nothing that you could fault about his reception of us, he was gracious and it was a gracious thing for him to meet with us. There was a sense that the Department had to do something to respond to this internal criticism or they were going to have a serious morale problem.

Q: You moved over to the Colombian desk in 1969, and you were there until 1971. When the Nixon administration took over, which was on January 20, 1969, did you sense a real change of course vis a vis, Latin American affairs? Because when the Reagan administration took over from the Carter administration in 1981, there was, particularly in the ARA context, there was what one can only describe as "blood in quarters". Did you feel any change or any hostility?

JONES: No. There may have been more above my level, but I don't think so. The wrenching political turnovers are a disastrous, appalling, aspect of American government, but they began with the Carter administration, not earlier.

Q: That would have been 1977.

JONES: Yes. The transition from Johnson to Nixon I recall as being very smooth. There were senior Foreign Service Officers who were involved in the policymaking of the new administration. Some of us mid-level officers had been talking in the Open Forum about the failure of the Alliance for Progress, in terms of its announced goals—I mean if you wanted to look at it purely as a vehicle for transmitting assistance to Latin America, it had succeeded in that, it had accomplished its goal. Not as much as had been originally trumpeted, but substantial amounts. That's nothing to sneer at, there is certainly important

infrastructure in Latin America today that dates back to the Alliance for Progress period. But in terms of its loftier goals of stabilizing democracy and bringing about real economic reform, it clearly had been a dismal failure. Unsurprisingly this was seen clearly at senior levels as well as at the mid-level. The senior levels of the Department were involved in the formulation of the Nixon Latin American policy which came to be called benign neglect, that instead of the very activist Kennedy/Johnson posture of trying to make over these countries in our image, we were now going to step back and let them run their own affairs. Let them decide how they wanted to develop. We would be friendly, we'd be benign, but we were going to defend our own interests. We were not going to be activists pushing an agenda as it was perceived we had been in the previous administrations. Although I had not voted for Nixon and I'm not a Republican, I thought that was the right kind of policy to pursue. I had already come to the conclusion, and certainly nothing has happened in the 30 years since to change my mind, that the United States does not know a lot about how to run other countries' affairs. And that every time we have tried to do it, the road has been littered with failures. Things turned out completely the opposite of the way we intended them to go, like trying to encourage the overthrow of Allende in Chile, or blocking the election of Cheddi Jagan in Guyana, to name only two of the many, many, examples. We didn't know enough about the dynamics of other societies to be able to push in the right direction. I do think you needed some corollaries to benign neglect, which subsequent administrations added. But I think the fundamental concept that other countries are responsible for their own development is sound. Development cannot be created externally, you can't say “I'm going to give you one billion dollars and you are going to develop.” It won't work unless the country itself is ready to develop, wants to develop, and wants to make the effort.

Q: What were you having to deal with during the Colombian period from 1969 to 1971?

JONES: One of the aspects of this period that is important, is that this was the period of the experiment in integrating State and AID. It started at some point while I was on the Venezuelan desk, I think after I had been there about a year. It was announced that the

Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs would also be the Coordinator of the Alliance for Progress and the Assistant Administrator of AID for Latin America, combining three jobs in one, and that the bureaus and desks in AID dealing with Latin America would combine both physically and organizationally with the State desks. So the AID desk officer was now going to report to me. That was an interesting experience. It was broken up after I left, I guess sometime in the late 1970's they separated at the office levels and then they finally separated at the Assistant Secretary level as well. The offices remained nearby, which was a great convenience at the very least to have the physical proximity. That is now going to end because AID is moving out of the State Department building.

In Colombia, AID was a major player, they had a very large AID program at that time. Marvin Weissman, who was subsequently the Ambassador to Costa Rica, was the AID Mission Director for Colombia—administering hundreds of millions of dollars. Of course the problem as with so many things done in the U.S. government is that somebody at the top who wants to get something done and wants to get it done right away, sends down an order that such-and-such will be done. So it is done, with no preparation, no training, no planning, none of the ingredients necessary to actually make it work. It really would have made more sense to have had me reporting to the AID desk officer, who was older and who had been in the job for years, than it was to do it the other way around. If we were going to actually be running the AID operation, we needed more economic training than most desk officers had, and more management training, but none of that happened. We did the best we could, but I think in fact, the two organizations continued to function much as they had before, with the added burden of trying to adjust to each other's presence.

Q: What was the situation in Colombia during this time, from your perspective?

JONES: The great issue in Colombia at that time was how you could assure the continuance of political tranquility. Colombia had the bloodiest civil war of anyplace in Latin America. It was surpassed only by ours. It was fighting between the liberal and conservative parties and their supporters. It had finally been ended with an agreement

that the parties would alternate in power for, I believe, 20 years. At the time that I was on the desk it was still working, working well, the country was stable and peaceful. There was every reason to be hopeful for the future of Colombia. The question was, what would happen when the truce came to an end and open political competition started again. The conventional wisdom was that the liberals in fact were the dominant party and that once you returned to political competition the liberals would win most elections. That has in fact seemed to be the case. I guess it is quite often the case that the things you worry about turn out not to be the real issues. Nobody at that point was worried about drugs. Nobody saw that 20 years down the line, Colombia would be controlled by drug barons and would be the primary source of drug trafficking to the United States. On the economic side, as I said, the AID program and of course coffee, we worked on a lot of issues related to coffee. Much like oil with Venezuela. It wasn't the question of domestic production, but the issues of price and the U.S. attitude toward, or participation in the international coffee agreement, whether it was possible to stabilize the price of coffee on the world market, whether the United States ought to support it or ought to oppose it.

Q: As a desk officer, what would a normal day be? What type of work would you be doing?

JONES: I always thought and still think the desk jobs are the best jobs in the Department. I enjoyed tremendously my four years as a desk officer. The State Department has come a long way in terms of training. It does do a lot more training than it used to. But its preferred modus operandi is still to dump somebody into a job who has never done anything like that before, with no training and preparation —they are given no instructions on how to do it, or even what they're supposed to do. You are told to figure it out and do what seem sensible and full speed ahead. That certainly was my experience during my entire career.

I'm concerned that the quality of desk officers today has been affected by the entirely laudable desire to establish equity among all members of the Service. We have guilt feelings as American democrats over the fact that political and economic officers are much more likely to become Ambassadors and Deputy Assistant Secretaries, and therefore,

horror of horrors, might be viewed as some kind of elite group. Administrative and consular so, the argument runs, officers might be viewed as second class citizens and we've got to do something to prevent that. One of the things that we've done about it is to fill the desks with Admin and Consular officers, who do the best they can. But I don't think—especially given the lack of any kind of training in what a desk officer is supposed to do—the problem is that the Department itself doesn't have any concept of what they are supposed to do. There is no ideology, there is no viewpoint in the Department. You can't find anywhere a manual that says what the responsibilities and obligations of a desk officer are. The reason that you can't is probably because you couldn't get agreement on them. There is no received wisdom with regard to the duties of any position. There is a little more attention to the position of Ambassador, but not a hell of a lot more. So you're thrown into the job, but if the desk is going to be properly run the officer has to establish very clearly and keep hitting people over the head with it, that everything that goes to the post, has to go through the desk. And it has to have the desk officer's clearance. That can be done, it takes a lot of work, it takes a lot of bureaucratic infighting. That's the way the system is supposed to work and the system will work, if the desk officer is vigorous and aggressive in establishing his or her role. It won't work if the desk officer sits back and doesn't raise a fuss when somebody sends something out without clearance. The philosophy is that nobody will defend you if you won't defend yourself. You can establish your position as the central clearing house. It doesn't mean that you can refuse clearance on 99% of the things that come across your desk. Most of it, you have to automatically give your clearance, but the point is that you know what's going on. You know what's going down to the post, you can relate one thing to another because you're aware of things. You can keep the post informed.

The other big part of the job is that you are the post's main contact with the Department. Desk officers work very closely with Ambassadors and DCM's. In most countries they are the closest contact that the Ambassador and the DCM has in Washington. Most Assistant Secretaries and Deputy Assistant Secretaries just don't have the time to be in daily contact

with anybody but their most important Ambassadors, the ones who are in the midst of the most urgent crises. They expect the desk officer to be the hand holder and to provide any service to the Ambassador that is necessary. That's a very useful experience for a mid-level officer, to have that kind of frequent, daily, contact with an Ambassador.

Q: Were there any particular crises or problems during your time at the Colombian desk?

JONES: I tend to remember the odd things, the funny things. A lot of time was spent on an issue of no importance whatsoever. There were three tiny little islands in the Caribbean Sea, and they were claimed by both Colombia and the United States. They had the oddest names: one of them was called “Roncador,” which means “The Snorer,” and another was “Quita Sue#o,” that which keeps you awake. Colombia was anxious to establish its sovereignty and the question of “Why not?” began to be asked in the Department. We had good relations with Colombia, and do these islands have any importance to us, is there any good reason why we should maintain our claim? Our claim was based on a law called the Guano Act back in the 19th century, which said that the people who were making a business out of collecting the droppings of birds and bats—guano—could lay claim to any island on which they found guano.

Q: This is the “Bird Shit” rule.

JONES: Exactly. [laughter] I was trying to keep this interview clean. [laughter] So it was entirely on the basis of the fact that once a long time ago, these islands had been rich in guano, that we had laid claim to them. We did finally accomplish a formal renunciation of U.S. sovereignty over these little islands and I had a great feeling of accomplishment. I think at high tide there was almost no island there, that's how tiny they were. They weren't entirely under water, but close to it. I dealt a lot with Occidental Petroleum, oddly, on the Colombian desk more than I had on the Venezuelan desk because they weren't in Venezuela. They were interested in that general area of the Caribbean and they were

interested in know what a renunciation of U.S. sovereignty might mean to their potential for prospecting.

Q: Was there any problem while you were working on this with Congress, or anything like that?

JONES: Fortunately no. Nobody ever got excited about these three little bat-dropping islands. We also spent some time on the Pan American Highway issue, during the Nixon administration. Nixon for some reason (or people working for Nixon) got interested in the idea of completing the Pan American Highway. The highway, which was built two-thirds with U.S. money, is complete except for one stretch from the Panama Canal to the Colombian border where there are no roads at all. It looked for a while as if the United States might actually finance the construction of that last stretch of the highway. Then it would have been possible to drive all the way from Alaska to Buenos Aires, a long exhausting journey over some very bad roads, but nevertheless, it would be possible. But it didn't happen. Apparently it was a tremendous engineering job to build a highway through jungle and swamp, and there was concern that you would be removing a natural barrier to hoof-and-mouth disease, that cattle would wander north from Colombia and the disease spread to the United States. And environmental concerns—although those were not quite as strong back then as they are now, but there were concerns about that too.

Q: What type of government did Colombia have at this time?

JONES: Elected. Elected under this political pact, under which anybody could run, but since there was a candidate who had the backing of the liberal and conservative parties he was a foregone conclusion to win. There was free competition for the congressional seats and in every other sense it was functioning as a normal democracy.

Q: Did Cuba raise any problems?

JONES: No, not that I recall. All through this period you would have meetings of the UN and the OAS and other international bodies and there would be a resolution that related to Cuba and you had to go about getting support for the U.S. position from the government you were dealing with.

Q: This is the time when both Nixon and his National Security Advisor, Henry Kissinger, did see things in an East/West confrontation. Which was essentially Soviet versus Western interest. Did this translate at all with the Colombian situation?

JONES: No, because there was no significant communist threat in Colombia. You had the guerrilla movement in Venezuela, but it wasn't posing a threat, it was under control. If you had guerrillas in Colombia at that time, they were very small. I can't remember there being a concern at all. It's amazing how the situation in countries can completely change. I went down as desk officer to visit Medellin and Cali, we had consulates in both cities, no threat at all, at that time, from terrorists or drug traffickers.

Q: You left there in 1971, where did you go then?

JONES: I went to Vienna. I preceded Mr. Kissinger. A couple of years later he came up with this idea of GLOP—Q: Which was inspired by his going to a meeting in Mexico City and his conclusion that the ARA people who were meeting there were far too concerned with Latin America.

JONES: Yes, and not concerned or aware of enough the big issues that he was dealing with. I came to essentially the same conclusion, a little earlier—I was too much of a Latin American specialist and I did not have enough experience in other areas. I wanted to get into Europe. So I looked at what was available (this was still in the period where if I had been overseas it would have been hard to find out what was available, but since I was in the Department it was easier) and I looked at several jobs that were possibilities, Milan, Frankfurt, and then someone suggested that I talk to IO and look at IO jobs.

Q: IO being the International Organizations Bureau.

JONES: That's right. There was a job in the U.S. Mission to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and the post was Vienna. It was a political advisor job. That immediately piqued my interest. It was a very unusual situation, in that we had a resident minister full time in Vienna, he was in fact a man of ambassadorial rank, Dwight Porter, for the whole period I was there. Then above him was the Ambassador to the IAEA, who was based in Washington, with an office in the State Department. He went out to Vienna four or five times a year for the major conferences. The Ambassador was Keith Glennan, a former member of the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission. He interviewed me and offered me the job. As it turned out I had a difficult decision to make, the Ambassador from Colombia offered me the job of political counselor in Bogota, which was a jump up and very attractive. It was very hard to make up my mind. But I decided to stick with my original plan—because people had told me that the problem with moving into another bureau is that what will be offered to you by the bureau that knows you and where you have established your credentials is going to be better than what is likely to be offered to you by the bureau that doesn't know you. So I was somewhat psychologically prepared for the fact that I was going to have to give up something good in Latin America in order to move into Europe.

So I went through twelve weeks of German at FSI. IO would not let me take any more than that because they were jumping up and down to get me out to Vienna, the Political Advisor was leaving and they wanted me to have two days overlap with him before he left. Also because, as they told me and it turned out to be true, German was not used at all in the job, English was the language spoken in the Atomic Energy Agency. You needed German only for shopping and restaurants. Nevertheless, I regret that I wasn't able to finish the full course.

Q: How long were you in Vienna?

JONES: From 1971 to 1974, three years. It was a very good job. It certainly was one of the highlights of my Foreign Service experience. I really enjoyed those three years in Vienna. I enjoyed working in the international environment. The larger countries had resident missions there, but at the time of the big conferences you had well over one hundred countries sending delegates to the General Conference of the IAEA. Working with that variety of different countries and doing the kind of lobbying and corridor politicking that goes on in international organizations was very new and very interesting to me.

Nonproliferation was also a field that was both new and very interesting. I tried very hard after leaving Vienna to get another job in the nonproliferation field. It's odd because I could have gotten another IO job quite easily, but there simply weren't that many jobs working on nonproliferation issues - despite its critical importance to our national security - and there were none that were available right then. I was never able again to make the right timing to get into a good job in that field, so I never came back to it after Vienna. Other than to write my paper on it at the National War College. I always regretted that because I thought it was something that was really important and that was really worthwhile to work on. So it was a complete change from Latin America, of course there were a few, just a handful, of Latin American embassies in Vienna and their primary mission was to the Austrian government. They spent only a fraction of their time on atomic energy matters. The people who did have full time specialists there were the major European countries and ourselves.

It was also my first contact with the Russians, I had never been a country where there was a Russian Embassy before and here they were a major player. Although we treated them with some caution, it was still the cold war after all, and we did a lot of speculating about who among the people we were dealing with was KGB and who wasn't. I think they were more unreservedly friendly toward us than we were toward them.

Q: Essentially, in this particular agency we were on the same side, weren't we?

JONES: Yes. I think some of our reserve in dealing with them stemmed from our doubts as to whether they could ever really be on the same side. But I think that very clearly they were. They shared our view that proliferation of nuclear weapons did not serve the state interests of the atomic powers. On nonproliferation issues they were our most solid collaborator. The people that we had the biggest arguments with, ironically, were the Western Europeans whose commercial firms were determined to sell nuclear equipment and materials. The same thing was true in the conventional arms field, that the American companies were more used to and more accepting of government regulation, than European companies were. The European governments had great difficulty enacting legislation that would restrict the export of nuclear supplies or arms.

Q: What were the major issues? Obviously nonproliferation was one, which was to keep nuclear weapons or the ability to make nuclear weapons out of other areas. I would have thought that, particularly in that time, in 1971 - 1974, that South Africa, Israel, India/ Pakistan, and Brazil were the major players. Was that the case?

JONES: Certainly we were concerned about Argentina and Brazil and I'm not sure we had all of the evidence at that time, but we suspected and certainly later confirmed that both countries had nuclear weapons programs. India, South Africa, and Israel did too, and there was concern that new sales would add other people to the club. Sales to Argentina and Brazil would enable them to complete their programs, same thing with Pakistan and South Africa. So all of those were concerns. The day-to-day nuts and bolts work was completing the net of acceptance of the Nonproliferation Treaty, the NPT. Getting as many countries as possible, getting all of the hold out countries into one form or another of acceptance of the treaty. One of our accomplishments in the Mission, not really mine, but of other people in the Mission was getting—the Latins had created their own treaty, the Treaty of Tlatelolco, to ban nuclear weapons. During the period that I was there, the first Tlatelolco country came to the IAEA to negotiate an agreement for inspections under the treaty, the country was Panama, and the Mission was successful in getting an agreement between

the Agency and Panama which was essentially identical to the agreement that Panama would have entered into had it been a party to the NPT. So we avoided the specter of having two totally different regimes, and levels of inspection, and it became irrelevant whether a country was under Tlatelolco, or under the NPT. As a consequence, now most of them are under both.

Of course the developing countries were interested in technical assistance from the agency. Technical assistance in beneficial uses of atomic energy, and at that time the belief was much more widespread that there lots of beneficial uses, than it is today —including some very wild ideas about how atomic energy might benefit them. The developing countries wanted to make sure that they got in on the act and they thought of it in terms of, all right, we will accept these nonproliferation rules, but in return for that we want an ironclad commitment that we are going to get substantial technical assistance out of the agency. Their feeling was always that not enough funding was being provided for technical assistance and that the West wasn't living up to its commitment. So you had that argument going on endlessly and coming up at every major conference.

Q: In the international organizations—one of the problems that we often have is with France. Was France a problem in this case?

JONES: I think France and Germany were equally difficult. The British were fully on our side, but this was the early period of their membership in the European Union and the British representative, Freddy Jackson, got very upset with me one day because during an IAEA meeting I leaned over to consult with him (as we did constantly) and he felt that would be perceived by his European colleagues, as the U.S. and the U.K. once again going behind their back to consult on something and he felt that I had compromised him, simply by approaching him. [laughter] So the British were having to walk a tight rope between the policies that they had always pursued jointly with the U.S. and what the European Union, very much driven by their commercial considerations, would permit.

Q: What about India? From my understanding India has always maintained the idea that they were not going to join the NPT unless we eliminated all nuclear weapons. Was that their stand at that time?

JONES: Yes, India and Mexico and any number of others felt that the West was not doing nearly enough toward disarmament. The main argument used against joining the NPT was that it was a grossly discriminatory document, that it gave absolute free reign to explode, test, use, nuclear weapons to the five publicly acknowledged nuclear weapons states but prohibited it for everyone else. You were in effect being asked to sign a document saying that you cannot do this, but it's perfectly okay if I do it. In the case of India, one could question the ultimate sincerity of this argument since they clearly had nuclear weapons. But there were others who used it with more sincerity, and others who—leaving aside the strictly nuclear issue, leaving aside any question of equality of treatment—who felt that the NPT did contain explicit pledges by the big powers to work toward disarmament. The argument was made that the West had not done nearly enough to fulfill those pledges. The NPT has a provision that every five years there will be an international conference to review progress under the treaty. At every review conference that argument was fought out.

Q: During this time, how did you view and how did we act towards Israel? We've always had this dual policy towards Israel on nuclear things, at least it seems to me that we know bloody well that they have developed the bomb and they have it but at the same time, we have to treat them with extra care. Was there a problem there?

JONES: Yes, it was something we were all conscious of. As you said, everyone knew that the Israelis had a or several nuclear weapons. But it wasn't something that you could prove and there were political reasons for not saying anything publicly even if you could prove it. It was not a major issue in IAEA conferences, it was not one of the boiling hot issues. One of the most difficult diplomatic issues that we had during that period was the Chinese seat. This was the period when Kissinger went to China and we suddenly shifted

our whole Chinese policy. Part of the problem was that the White House did not send (perhaps for domestic political reasons) clear instructions down through the bureaucracy. So you had a new relationship being created with China but IO was still operating under the standing instructions that we were to oppose China's taking over the Taiwanese seat in all U.N. agencies. We had extended and acrimonious negotiations with the Romanians who were acting on behalf of the Chinese, in which the Romanians were very puzzled. They came into the negotiations all smiles and went out of them with very puzzled frowns because we were not caving in as they had expected. We were still following instructions to try to preserve the Taiwanese seat if we possibly could, working very closely with the Taiwanese Ambassador in Vienna. Ultimately of course, the Chinese came into the IAEA and all of the other U.N. agencies. Then we had a very complicated budgetary problem about what their assessment was going to be and how to construct the IAEA budget to end Taiwanese contributions and pick up the Chinese.

Q: How sincere did you feel the support was that you were getting from the Nixon/ Kissinger administration towards this? Because Kissinger and Nixon were often playing almost a double game, they had other things going on, so they would make noises about one thing, but if they weren't focused on that then you really didn't get the support.

JONES: Kissinger playing a double game, I'm shocked. [laughter] On the nuclear proliferation issues, one of the things that made the work enjoyable was that there was a real community of people who believed in these issues. People at the Atomic Energy Commission, people in the State Department, people there in the Mission, most of them had been life-long specialists in this field; Ambassador Porter and I were among the rare drop-in's. We all believed in what we were doing and adopted very much of a common front against the pesky Europeans. There was very little dissent, very little problem in getting what we wanted out of Washington in the way of support. To the extent that there was a problem, the problem was the lack of progress on disarmament issues. Which were going on, to the extent that they were going on at all, in the Committee on Disarmament in Geneva, and that was a totally different set of people, the people who worked on

disarmament. I think the calculations of Kissinger and the White House were related to those issues, so the progress there or the lack of progress affected the work that we were doing in Vienna.

Q: You left Vienna in 1974, then where did you go?

JONES: To Guatemala. I had had my excursion tour out of Latin America and I was now ready to come back into it. So I looked around for a job in Latin America and there were several things under discussion and I remember it was three weeks before we were due to leave Vienna, my successor was arriving, and I still didn't have an assignment. I called up the guy in personnel who was handling my transfer and he said, “Haven't those orders been issued? You're going to Guatemala, everybody here knows that, didn't anybody tell you?” [laughter]

Q: So in 1974 you were off to Guatemala. What was your job?

JONES: I was head of the political section. There were two other officers in the section, Donald Johnson and Raymond Burghardt. I had dinner with Don two nights ago, he has just completed a tour as Ambassador to Mongolia, and the State Department's candidate to succeed him there is Ray Burghardt. [laughter]

Q: I hope they've improved their quarters. I interviewed Joe Lake who ran the mimeograph off of the bathtub with a piece of plywood put over the back of the bathtub. I think at one time they were working in an apartment house where his wife and his son were both involved in helping run the office because there was nobody else around. [laughter]

JONES: I would also hope that it has improved somewhat. Although I gather that conditions remain about as rough in Mongolia as they are anywhere. Among other reasons, because of the terrible climate.

Q: Well, back to Guatemala.

JONES: Yes. So we had a very high quality political section there that went on to do great things.

Q: You were in Guatemala from 1974 to when?

JONES: From 1974 to 1977.

Q: Okay, that was three years, when you arrived in 1974, what was the situation in Guatemala, politically and economically?

JONES: Politically that particular period was something of a lull between storms. The President was Kjell Laugerud. A general with a Norwegian name, who was probably the best of the military presidents that Guatemala had in the post World War II era. He was not a saint, by any means, but he was by temperament more of a conciliator and less of a tyrant than most of his colleagues who made it to the presidency. So it was a military dictatorship, on paper it was elected, but the elections had been repeatedly stolen over the years. We were able to have reasonably good relations with his government, he certainly sought good relations with the United States. Because the level of human rights abuses was relatively low at that point, we were not under such tremendous pressure as we were both earlier and later, to really turn the screws on the Guatemalan government.

Q: What were American interests there at this time?

JONES: The issue that took up the largest single chunk of my time was the Guatemala/ Belize dispute. Guatemala claimed Belize was a part of its territory. There was considerable concern that with a military government in power, the Guatemalan army might simply take it into its head at some point to invade the territory and seize it. Belize at that time was still a British colony, and because of the dispute there were no diplomatic relations between Guatemala and Britain, but there were consular relations. One of the nice aspects of Latin America is that, I think uniquely in the world, they long ago invented this doctrine that political relations and consular relations are separate, and if you break

relations with a country you don't withdraw your consul—it's very pragmatic, you've got to figure that your citizens have got to travel to the other country anyway, and so you need somebody there to issue the visas. So Guatemala never closed down its consulate in Britain, and they allowed the British to have a consul there. Of course the British named someone who was senior enough to be an Ambassador and functioned as an Ambassador. We worked very closely with him in exchanging information and looking for ways to resolve the dispute—the British of course were interested in getting it off of their back. They had to station troops in Belize which they would much rather not have there, they would like to be able to pull them out and get disengaged and disinvolved from this remote corner of the world. Our interests largely coincided with theirs because we were very interested in not having a war in the Americas, not having a military action between any two countries, including Guatemala and Belize, with all of the consequences that we saw later in the Falklands. So I spent a large part of my time—you would get pieces of information that the dispute had heated up, or it had cooled down, and you were always involved in trying to assess just how likely it was that the Guatemalans would take some hot-headed action. And also analyzing various proposals and ideas for resolving the dispute.

One of the real problems the Guatemalans had was in terms of the maritime boundary; if you drew the boundaries by conventional rules, they would have a very narrow corridor out into the Caribbean. So one of the solutions to the dispute was to try to encourage both sides to agree on modified maritime limits—there was no disposition on the part of Belize or of the British to cede any of the land territory, but there were indications that they were willing to compromise on the issue of the maritime boundary. That would solve one of the Guatemalans' problems and might help push the overall dispute along to resolution. During my three years, we didn't get anywhere. These territorial disputes move extremely slowly if they move at all. I think we were essentially pretty much where we were when I left as when I arrived. I did feel that the U.S. influence, exercised primarily through the embassy, had helped restrain the hot-heads in Guatemala—had helped convince them that if they

did invade Belize they would have not only the British but also the Americans very much against them.

Q: The British couldn't counter an attack with their troops as a response?

JONES: They could have held off the Guatemalans until reinforcements arrived, no question.

Q: I assume our policy was that we wouldn't recognize and we would look very hard on anybody who seized territories.

JONES: That's right.

Q: Was this spelled out again and again to the Guatemalans?

JONES: Yes, mainly in private. We tried to avoid embarrassing them by rubbing it in more than we had to publicly. It was our assessment, which we had to make over and over again in reporting to the Department, that the Guatemalans were unlikely to attack. The British were always more nervous than we were (understandably given their situation). The British were always alarmed by some new piece of intelligence or other information that they interpreted as meaning the Guatemalans were getting ready to move. It was the embassy's judgment that it was very unlikely that the Guatemalans would in fact do this, that whatever else you thought of the Guatemalans, their leadership was not stupid and it was not going to plunge into this, given the obvious consequences. For whatever reasons that was the right analysis since no Guatemalan action ever took place then or later.

Q: What about American commercial interests in Guatemala?

JONES: They were not great, there wasn't a huge amount of American commercial interest. The other major issue that consumed our time (at least in the political section) was in the broadest sense, the issue of human rights. From the perspective of U.S. human rights organizations there was only one aspect to Guatemala, which was the aspect of

government security forces killing innocent people, which certainly occurred in Guatemala, before, during and after my time there. But from the U.S. Government's perspective, the situation had other aspects as well. One of them was the fact that Guatemala had and has the oldest guerrilla movement in the Americas, it has had a continuous guerrilla movement going on since 1960. There was no indication that it was anywhere close to coming to power, but its activities were a concern to us. Then, and perhaps the greatest concern of all at that time, there was simply the Guatemalan propensity for killing each other for political reasons. Guatemalans are wonderful people and I enjoyed tremendously knowing them, but I never served among a people who would so casually eliminate each other as they would in Guatemala. Most politicians carried weapons all of the time. A significant number of my closest contacts were killed either during the time I was there or after I left. Meme Colon, the former mayor of Guatemala City, Danilo Barillas and a host of others. Trying to report on and analyze this self- destructiveness in which the Guatemalans were engaged, was a major preoccupation. The specifically human rights side of it was a growing concern because of growing interest in the United States. First of all we had the amendments to the Foreign Assistance Act in the Ford administration and I remember standing in the embassy in Guatemala and listening to Jimmy Carter's inaugural address on the radio, in which he used the term human rights over and over.

Q: That was January 20, 1977.

JONES: Right. So there was a trend in the United States and also there was a trend in Guatemala, particularly after things grew worse and worse. As near as we could tell (there was a lot of debate about it) Laugerud had control over who would succeed him and he picked (I won't say the worst General, because there were certainly a lot of competitors for the worst possible General he could have picked) one of the worst people in the senior levels of the Guatemalan army, Romeo Lucas, that he could have possibly picked to succeed him. Something we didn't understand then and I don't think we ever understood was if he felt compelled, if he felt he didn't have any choice, or if there was some mysterious tie to this guy that we didn't know about. We thought Laugerud had done

a reasonably good job, given the fact that he was a military dictator, in restraining the violent forces that were involved in Guatemala. And to sort of throw it all away by turning the government over to a troglodyte, a Neanderthal, was incredible. And things didn't get any better for years after that.

Q: I take it that you didn't have a United Fruit company type of thing, or some kind of American firm that had...

JONES: Honestly I can't remember if United Fruit was still active in Guatemala at that time or not.

Q: Well, you're answering my question. So it was not on your plate as an issue.

JONES: I think a lot of things had happened, the nature of the banana business had changed, it became less profitable, so that U.S. companies were not as dominant in it as they had been previously, and no one company had the dominance that United Fruit had once had.

Q: What about the Cuba factor at this time?

JONES: Not in a striking way, the way it had been in Venezuela with the landing of a boat on the seacoast, or that it was in a number of other places. It was clear the Cubans were giving assistance to the guerrillas, they were giving military training to the guerrillas who went off to Cuba. There probably was financial and military equipment support as well. Although, I think the guerrillas did pretty well financing themselves and arming themselves, by domestic actions, banks were always getting robbed, and it was always a nice question as to whether a given incident had been carried out by criminals or if they were guerrillas who were collecting money for the revolution. The line between the criminals and guerrillas got a little fuzzy at times. They also would stage a raid and capture some weapons. I don't think Cuba was critical to the continuance of the guerrilla movement, it was doing all right on its own at a relatively low level.

Q: How were its relations with its neighbor to the north, Mexico?

JONES: They were okay. The Guatemalans worried about and were a little suspicious of the Mexicans as any of the Latin American countries are of a larger neighbor. But they were not tense, I remember the president of Mexico came to visit Guatemala toward the end of my time. You had Guatemalans across the border and in Mexico, but I think they were not the numbers of them that there were later, and you did not yet have them organized into formal camps as they later became. So that wasn't as much of an irritant to relations with Mexico as it subsequently became. Irritants on both sides because the Mexicans didn't want to have these people on their territory and yet the Guatemalans felt that the Mexicans were allowing the guerrillas to use Mexican territory as a base, there were people who were slipping out of the camps and moving back across the border to cause trouble.

Q: How were relations with the other two neighbors, El Salvador and Honduras?

JONES: They were good, there were no particular problems. There were also military governments in both of those countries at this time, so they were birds of a feather. There was no reason not to get along well.

Q: I'm not sure about the timing on this, but while you were there did the Somoza regime go down the tubes? Had it collapsed while you were there?

JONES: No, that was a little later. It was in 1979 when Somoza was overthrown. That had not become a Central American issue at that point.

Q: Who was the Ambassador at that time?

JONES: The Ambassador the first couple of years that I was there was Frank Meloy, who went from Guatemala to Lebanon and was murdered in Lebanon almost immediately after arriving. Most of us who had known him were still there in the embassy and it was a great

shock to the embassy staff when we heard the news. He was succeeded by Davis Eugene Boster, but everybody called him Gene. I think he was there a year, maybe less than a year before I left.

Q: From your perspective how did they find the country? They've got a military dictatorship, our interests were not overly great, and most of the time it sounds like we were nagging at them about human rights.

JONES: That's true. I'm tempted to say that was true of most of our embassies in Latin America. That's changing and hopefully that will change entirely someday. As countries become industrialized and full participants in the world economy, then you have a mature dialogue, there are all kinds of common issues that you can talk about. When the countries are not yet at that level then the connection, the relationship, between the United States and the country, is much less rich and varied. A lot of what you are dealing with them on is complaints, you are nagging at them. Or they at you to a lesser degree, but still to some degree. Because the thing that Washington wants you to do above everything else, is to get them to stop causing trouble, whether over a border controversy, or human rights, or a military coup, or their expropriation of an American company. Those were the things which were the big issues during most of my time in Latin America. Because their economy and their internal development hadn't reached the level where those irritants simply wouldn't occur—there would be no question of their invading a neighbor, there would be no question of their expropriating a foreign company, they wouldn't be abusing human rights, there wouldn't be military coups. Those things are all characteristics of less developed countries and when you get beyond that stage, those are no longer issues. So the U.S. Embassy is no longer nagging at you about them. [laughter]

Q: What about, from the political officer's perspective, the contacts you would make? Some of those countries obviously don't know anything about that, but you have the ten families of any Central American country—did you find that there were people you went to, other than the Generals?

JONES: There was not an economic oligarchy in Guatemala as there—at that time—I'm groping to say whether or not it's a factor of time or simply the difference between one country and another. I think it's probably more a factor of time, not only in Guatemala but in other countries as well. Back in the period when coffee was overwhelmingly the export, the coffee plantation owners not only in Guatemala but in other coffee exporting countries, they did constitute an oligarchy. You had similar situations in other countries where you had one dominant crop and its control was in the hands of a few families. Again, there is a factor of development that occurs here. There are infinite stages of development that you go through, not just a simple step of one day you are less developed and the next day you are developed. They had moved beyond that stage, the economy was more diversified. There were certainly businessmen who exercised political influence, but they were by no means a secret group that was running the country. The military ran Guatemala then and for a long time afterwards. Although there were ways in which their interests were allied with those of the powerful businessman and it was quite common for Colonels to—businessmen would take a Colonel and make him a low interest loan or sell him a valuable piece of property at a low price, or something like that in order to establish a relationship with him that they could draw on in the future. Nevertheless, the military really governed Guatemala in its own interest, in its own perception of Guatemala's interest and it wasn't being manipulated by other groups.

Q: Did we have a military representative, an attach#, or program there that was dealing with the military, military to military?

JONES: Yes.

Q: How did you find this as an instrument for what you wanted to find out about Guatemala?

JONES: [laughter] I expect you know the answer I'm going to give to that question, because I expect it's the answer you get from everybody. The military attach#s were

almost useless as sources of information, not only in Guatemala but elsewhere as well. In the first place their function was to be an intelligence officer but they were not professional intelligence officers, most of them were serving a single tour of duty as an attach#. Very few attach#s went on to become Generals. It was not regarded as a career- enhancing specialty in the Army or in any of the services. So it did not attract the best people, they were not professional intelligence officers, they were from another specialty who were dragooned into a tour as an attach#. The Latin American military were smart enough to know that what they did say to a U.S. military attach# was going to be reported and rarely did they say anything that was of any significance or that helped us out. The military attach#s used to send in a lot of newspaper clippings to DIA, the Defense Intelligence Agency. We used to joke that that was their main function. In their defense, they had a very hard task, especially in Guatemala, but generally in any of the military dictatorships that I was familiar with. The task of finding out what the military thought and what they were up to, was an extremely—they were a very hard target. They were not talkative about the institution and discussing its intentions with foreigners was, to put it mildly, not encouraged. In Chile it was very tightly controlled, I've forgotten if we observed this in Guatemala, but I wouldn't be surprised. If you were invited anywhere by a foreigner you had to report it to your superiors and it had to be approved before you could go. If you invited a whole bunch of military people, if they decided to go at all they would pick two or three who would be their chosen representatives and everyone else would decline. [laughter]

Q: From your perspective, what about the role of the Central Intelligence Agency there?

JONES: I certainly had lots of conflicts and lots of run-ins with the CIA over the years, but they were a different kettle of fish from the attach#s. First of all, the CIA people were professional intelligence officers, they were making a career out of it, almost all of them that I knew were very dedicated to their career, very hard working, and they were good quality people. Their product, the intelligence product was certainly useful. How useful it was varied from country to country and time to time, and a lot of the agency

product, too much of it, covered the same areas that the embassy political officers were working on. This was a constant source of irritation, and I don't think they told Washington that much more about normal, overt politics that was of any tremendous interest. The same point could be made about much of our reporting, was there really any need for Washington to know who was in and who was out, and what the inner machinations were of party X compared with party Y. There was an insatiable demand for information from Washington which drove both the embassy and the CIA, and yet one wonders what Washington ever did with the mountains of information that it got. Other than to fill up the files and demonstrate how well informed they were. I always thought that by far, we were the best informed government in the world. We produced the best information of any foreign service in the world. I had much more doubt about our knowing what to do with the information that we got. [laughter] At times I think there was a lot of information for information's sake, rather than relating it to things that we really needed to know.

But having said that, there was a part of CIA's reporting dealing with what the communist party was thinking and again, varying from country to country and time to time, but there were times and places where they had really good penetration into the leadership of the extreme left and were able to give us some really useful information about what the left were up to. They were not much more successful that the military attach#s with the military target. Again, that was just an extremely difficult target to penetrate. If you want to talk to a political leader, even a far left political leader, it's relatively easy to get to him and being a political animal he wants to talk, he likes to talk about politics. It's very hard to get to a foreign military officer, he's on a military base, he's constantly associating with his military colleagues, he's cut off from the world. That's one of the major problems, why there has been so much difficulty with Latin American military over the decades, because they are so isolated. Much more than our military, they are so cut off from the rest of the society and when you get to them, their whole training is to keep their mouths shut and salute, it's not to sit down and spill their guts to a foreigner. By and large the CIA's information on the military was very scarce and we didn't get a lot out of it.

Q: Central America and up into Mexico, from the people I've interviewed, it's always seemed to be a place where the American labor movement or labor attach#s, spent a considerable amount of time working in there, more than any other place. This seemed to be one of the main thrusts of our policy over a fairly extended period of time. Was this true in Guatemala when you were there?

JONES: We did not have a full time labor attach#. One of the officers in my Section spent part time on labor. Many aspects of Guatemalan society were sad, it was sad that they kept killing each other, it was sad that the military had seized power and had no inclination to give it up and let people choose their own government, and the human rights violations were tragic. The story of the labor movement is just another very sad chapter in Guatemalan history. The efforts to try to build up the labor movement—I think the American Institute for Free Labor Development, AIFLD (which is a branch of the AFL-CIO) did very useful work in bringing labor leaders to the U.S. for training, running training courses in Guatemala, and in many other countries, but it was a very uphill battle. The business class had no interest in unions, no belief in unions, they would lock them out and break the union at the first opportunity that they possibly could. It was not a happy story.

Q: When you were there, and again this was 1974 - 1977, were there any major events such as earthquakes, coups, state visits?

JONES: [laughter] I'm glad you mentioned the word earthquake. We were almost through with Guatemala without mentioning the most extraordinary event of my time there. The February 1976 earthquake, which was a 7 on the Richter Scale. Because it hit at 3:00 in the morning and the homes of the poor were normally adobe with no reinforcement whatsoever, the loss of life was enormous. I think there were about 30,000 people killed in the earthquake. It was one of the most lethal earthquakes, I think it ranks up there among the top 20 in the history of the world. Because everybody was home in bed and the roofs fell in on them and killed thousands of people.

Q: Where were you?

JONES: At home in bed. We were very lucky because we had spent some time house hunting and we had found a nice modern house and we said that we would take it, and we signed a contract on it, but there was some refurbishing that needed to be done. That was all agreed to with the landlord and then the day came when we were to sign the lease and we were told that the landlord had decided to rent it somebody else. So the house we wound up in was not nearly as attractive a house, but it had been built by a former Minister of Public Works, as his own home, so it was very well built. [laughter] The house had no damage from the quake, we lost a number of personal possessions, glasses fell off of shelves, and vases got broken. Days or weeks later when we drove by and the saw the house that we had been intending to rent, part of the roof had fallen in and all sorts of things had happened to it. We were very glad that we had not gotten it after all. [laughter]

Q: What did the embassy do with this disaster? How did we respond?

JONES: There were a few people who actually slept through the earthquake, amazingly. Those who didn't, I don't think anybody went back to bed, it was not an experience to go back to sleep after. After we had reassured our family (we had four children between the ages of 7 and 14) and surveyed the household, I went in to the embassy. In the middle and upper class sections of Guatemala City there wasn't a lot of visible damage. A few tiles off of roofs and so on, but there wasn't the impression that a lot had happened. Actually, I was more impressed once I got into the embassy because the books were off of shelves, water coolers were overturned—there was more visible damage inside the embassy than there was in my own house. We found out later that some of the copper pipes, plumbing and so on had been broken and they had to be replaced. The DCM, George Andrews, was already there and told me there was only one working telephone in the embassy, the switchboard was out. The phone was down on one of the lower floors, so he went to his office and told me to stay by the phone. The first thing we did was to call the Operations Center and report what had happened. Somehow the news

organizations found out that was the one working phone in the embassy (probably from the State Department because we had given them the number when we had reported in) and so I found myself talking to CBS and other media people calling to find out what was going on in Guatemala.

Of course the embassy's long-term response took place over weeks and months afterwards. Everything else in the embassy ceased, in terms of normal activities. For the next several weeks I forgot about the Belize/Guatemala controversy and human rights violations and worked full time on the earthquake—all of the details of getting the assistance mobilized and the right kind of assistance. We began a major relief effort, we got the military in Panama to send in helicopters and field hospitals and tents and that kind of thing. AID mobilized its resources and there was a lot of assistance given to rebuilding people's homes. In fact, later on the Peace Corps was active in trying to teach people how to build an adobe home but reinforce it so that the roof would not fall in.

One of the characteristics of well-publicized natural disasters is that everyone in the world wants to be helpful and all kinds of assistance arrives that is not useful. So we had to try to get people to concentrate on what the needs were—try to get the Guatemalans to tell us what they really needed and then get that word out to those who were trying help. It was an exciting time, because we felt that we were really doing something worthwhile. A lot of overtime was put in. We got an urgent request—I was called at home to say that a NIACT Immediate telegram —NIACT for night action—had come in that required an immediate response justifying the need for assistance—probably for Congressional testimony by someone. I and an AID officer went in and we drafted a response at 3:00 in the morning to this telegram. I made the decision not to wake the Ambassador or the DCM; we had extensively discussed the arguments for relief aid in the preceding days. The next morning Ambassador Meloy read it and said maybe he should ask us to write all our telegrams at 3 a.m. That did not normally happen, very few other times, if ever, did I send a telegram out at 3:00 in the morning in the course of my career. We had the feeling of being part of a common effort, embassy and AID were working together more closely than we normally

did, normally we were off each doing our own thing. Here we were working hand in hand. It was very rewarding. There was something of a let down afterwards, I'm told that the psychologists say that there is always a post-stress syndrome. You are doing fine at the time of greatest stress, but when it's over your psychological and physical adrenalin disappears and you're back to normal and you no longer have all of the excitement and the special things to do and you go through a period of depression. We got through all of that and eventually got back to normal.

Q: By any chance, were people talking about the horrible example of how our Ambassador acted? I think in Nicaragua some years earlier when there was a bad earthquake, he and his wife wouldn't allow anybody to use their house.

JONES: That was in 1972. We didn't have any situation like that. Of course we had a career Ambassador in Guatemala and a very fine one. One of the things which made it such a rewarding experience was that there wasn't anything of that kind. We had the military and AID and the embassy all working together. There wasn't the feeling that anybody was letting the side down, or refusing to make their best effort in the catastrophe. I think it was really an outstanding case of cooperation and coordination among all U.S. government elements. I thought at the time that there should have been a greater recognition of it by the Department. Of course there is no question that it loomed larger being on the scene in Guatemala than it undoubtedly loomed from the perspective of the Potomac. [laughter]

Q: You left there in 1977, where did you go then?

JONES: Back to Washington, I was selected for the National War College, one of those buttons you are supposed to push on the way up in the career. My intention was to request a tour in the Department after the War College assignment, since we were going to have to move the whole family to Washington for the year of the War College and we didn't want to have to move again afterwards. We decided that I would drive back to Washington

—I'm not sure precisely why, part of it was that we had a dog. There was a certain amount of looting and breaking into houses that was taking place in the disorganized atmosphere after the earthquake, so my wife decided that we ought to get a dog to protect the household. So we found this Doberman that had been born the night of the earthquake, and we had to get her back to Washington, and as you know the Department doesn't pay for the transport of pets. No question that part of it was because it sounded like a very adventurous and fun thing to do, so I drove from Guatemala to Washington with the dog. The rest of the family sensibly flew. [laughter] That was fun. I stopped off in Texas and visited my mother and then came on to Washington. I started classes at the War College in August 1977. It was a good year, I enjoyed the association with my military colleagues. There were a number of other foreign service people as well, but the great majority were military. I have always worked well with the U.S. military and I think that one of the things that has hurt the State Department in Washington, has been that it as a whole does not work well with the Defense Department. That obviously doesn't apply to everybody, but there is a lot of ignorance and misunderstanding about the military and a lot of deliberate avoidance of having anything to do with the Pentagon. I wish that every officer could go through the War College or some similar experience, I think it would be good for the foreign service.

Q: In particular I think, our generation of officers for the most part was male and a lot of us had military experience which at least exposed us to it and for the most part we understood what the military was about. But I think a newer generation has come along, out of the academic world, where it is very easy to be contemptuous of the military, which is a very bad mistake.

JONES: Yes, yes. There was a very fine foreign service officer named John Bushnell, for whom I worked. He was the Senior Deputy Assistant Secretary for Latin American Affairs during the Carter administration. I know for a fact that Bushnell is a conservative, in terms of his personal inclinations, but he was a highly capable, professional officer. From his perspective he was simply carrying out Carter administration policy. He made a lot

of enemies in the Pentagon, I think simply because he did not know how to deal with the Pentagon. He didn't know how to build his relationships with them, and create a separation between the relationship and the policy. The policy might be to stop doing certain things, and to cut your programs, and stay out of Latin America, etc. But you can convey those in such a way that you can keep a mutual respect and relationship going. I think it was fundamentally those enemies that he made in the Pentagon during that period, which prevented him from getting the Ambassadorship that he had earned and deserved. He was high up on the Reagan administration's hit list when it came in. But that's another story.

I enjoyed the year at the War College and did my paper, a sort of thesis that they have you write, on nuclear nonproliferation. I really wanted to get back into that field. I came out of the War College in May 1978, and not a single one of the foreign service officers there (I think there were 17 of us altogether) had an onward assignment. The Department in its usual competence at personnel administration, knowing that it had 17 people over there who were going to be graduating in May 1978, and were going to be available, and that they were going to have to do something with them on that entirely predictable date, did nothing. [laughter]

Q: I came out of the senior seminar in June 1975 and was more or less told to go and find myself a job.

JONES: That's essentially—I don't know if anybody ever told me that, but it was obviously what they expected me to do. So that's what I did. I could not find any opening in the nonproliferation field. I really did not want to go back to ARA, I was still trying to keep myself from being absolutely typed and classified as an ARA type and nothing else. But John Bushnell called me in and talked to me about jobs. He was the only person who had something to offer. So I took the job as deputy director of an office called Regional Political Programs, which was a strange name because we didn't have any political or other programs to administer. It was what in other bureaus was called Regional Political

Affairs. We did the sort of global crosscutting issues, we dealt with issues that came up in the U.N. relating to Latin America, and narcotics and fisheries. The bureau's labor advisor was in the office. But above all we handled military assistance and military sales to Latin America. We had an army Colonel who was seconded from the military and was on duty in the office. I found that the tendency had been, and my observation is that it's gone back to being that way, to give everything to the Colonel. Nobody in the foreign service understood and really wanted anything to do with military stuff, the idea was that you would get this Colonel and you would dump it all on him and not give it a further thought. I thought that our military assistance program was a major component of our foreign policy and what we did with it, how big it was going to be, what countries we would put the money into, was very much a foreign policy issue. John Bushnell felt the same way, so between us we raised the profile considerably of interest and involvement with military assistance issues.

Also tied in with that was the munitions list, the Department has an office of munitions control, whose job it is to administer the munitions list—a Congressionally-mandated list of products that require a State Department license for export overseas. These are not government-to-government sales, but sales by U.S. private firms. It's an unusual function, because there are very few other things where the Department has a legal role, a legal responsibility, visas obviously being one, the whole consular function. The policy with regard to other kinds of exports is entirely in the hands of the Commerce Department. At some point in the dim past, responsibility for the munitions list was put into the State Department. It covered all kinds of arms and ammunition, but a lot of other things, such as helicopters, aircraft, tear gas, anything that could remotely serve a military or law enforcement function, or might be converted into a military function. Of course the Carter administration was then in office and there was a lot of interest in why are we supplying tear gas which is being used by military dictatorships in Latin America to quell mobs and anyone can pick up a can and see “made in the U.S.A.” on it. That, word for word, is an argument I frequently had to answer. So we had some very difficult decisions to make on munitions list sales. The whole thing was very chaotic. The Office of Munitions Control

badly wanted some guidance from the Bureau of Inter-American Affairs, yet it had been getting almost no guidance. You had a huge backlog of cases on which it had been unable to any answer at all.

I spent at least half my time in RPP, if not more, on military issues and military related issues. I found it quite interesting.

Q: Were there any particular cases that come to mind, like jets to Chile, or something like that?

JONES: The details are fuzzy now, but we certainly did wrestle with—apart from the question of the acceptability of the recipient government; in the Carter administration, by and large, if the government was a military dictatorship they got very little out of us. We were mostly engaged in closing off loopholes and doorways. But apart from that issue, there was also the issue of was it in the U.S. interest, even if the government is a democracy, like Venezuela for example or Mexico which was civilian government, was it in our interest to supply them with our latest and most sophisticated weapons? Aircraft were the thorniest issue, because they were very expensive. Were we justified in letting these countries spend billions of dollars on acquisitions of the very latest aircraft? Aren't we simply being an accomplice in wasting their people's money? And helping to proliferate the spread of weaponry around the world, shouldn't we be doing something different?

In fact, the very first activity that I was engaged in after leaving the War College, was something called the US-Soviet Conventional Arms Talks (CAT), which I think is fair to say, were largely the brainchild of Leslie Gelb who had been a New York Times correspondent, but had come into the Carter administration as the Director of Political-Military Affairs. He and some other political appointee associates felt that as a parallel to the efforts that were going on toward limitation of nuclear weapons, that at least an exploration ought to take place of whether it was possible to limit the spread of conventional weapons. Which would obviously require the cooperation of other countries

and the place to start was with the Soviet Union, because if you couldn't get the Soviet Union on board then you would always be subject to the argument that if we restrain ourselves then the Soviets will walk in and undercut us.

So we had two sessions of talks with them, one in Helsinki in July 1978, and one in Mexico City in December 1978. They were not getting very far, it's not at all clear that they would have ever gotten anywhere because the Russians gave every indication that they thought this was one of the more bizarre ideas that the Americans had ever brought to them. I think they had a hard time figuring out why we were doing it. I'm sure the communists had a field day trying to think up Machiavellian motives for us in having raised this whole issue. I think they could see very little, if any, advantage to the Soviet Union. Whereas with regard to limiting nuclear weaponry, the advantage to the Soviet Union was obvious—keep others from achieving equality with the nuclear powers and possibly threatening the nuclear powers—it was not so obvious in conventional weaponry. When the talks broke down, however, they broke down not because of the Soviet Union, but because of bickering within the administration. While we were in Mexico City, Zbigniew Brzezinski had either not focused much on this activity or saw something in the reporting of what we were talking about that really set him off. He got the authority to in effect to tell Gelb to close off the talks and come home. That was exactly what we did, a very gloomy and discouraged U.S. delegation, leaving behind very puzzled Mexicans who had had great hopes for this move toward greater U.S./Soviet detente and couldn't really believe that it was falling apart in front of their eyes. There were no further talks; Gelb fought very intensely from Mexico to try to keep them alive but once the decision had been taken and he was ordered home, he just dropped the whole idea. There were no further such talks.

Q: We were working on trying to control the flow of arms into Latin America, what about the role of particularly the French, but also the British and other arms producers?

JONES: I think Gelb's strategy was that if you ever succeeded in working something out with the Russians that then you could turn to the Western Europeans and sort of

shame them into agreeing to something similar. To bring about some restraint on their sales, which were very much a factor. Apart from Peru which was buying Soviet arms and obviously Cuba, Russian arms sales in Latin America were not a problem anywhere else. The suppliers of arms were ourselves and the Western Europeans. The Latin Americans themselves made some efforts in the direction of limiting arms purchases from time to time. In fact, there had been some just prior to this U.S. effort and we were hoping to build on those Latin American initiatives. But those didn't come to anything either, because it was just as difficult to agree on restraint from the purchaser's side as it was from the supplier's side. [laughter] Because it required that your neighbors also agree to restrain their purchases. The net result of all the U.S. efforts at encouraging Latin restraint was that some things were delayed, some purchases that would have been made a little sooner were put off for a few years, but that is the most that you can say about Latin American military expansion. The latest fighter aircraft eventually got to Latin America.

I think disarmament initiatives are always worth trying because I think they do save money and all armaments are a waste of money if you can possibly avoid them. But for us to decide unilaterally, as we were frequently being asked to do in the Carter administration, that on behalf of a moral crusade we would offer them the F-5 in order to try and keep them from buying the F-16, or its French equivalent, was more than a little silly, because we were trying to substitute our own judgment for theirs. There was certainly a case for if it were a military government, not selling them anything at all. But if it was a civilian government like Venezuela or Mexico for example, to try to veto, to overrule their own sovereign decisions about what they were going to buy for their armed forces, was in the end unsuccessful and it accomplished nothing for us to try to stop them.

Q: In these regional issues, where did narcotics land? Was it a big thing at this time, or was it still in its infancy?

JONES: Compared to today it was still in its infancy. It was certainly growing, but it was not—none of these other issues that my office was concerned with consumed anywhere

near the time or attention that the military issues did. We had an occasional fishing boat that was seized or the occasional narcotics issue that came up. But most of our time (I was in the office from 1978 - 1982) was spent on the military. After the Reagan administration came in in January 1981, even though a number of the Carter administration policies were reversed, there was still a lot of activity, a lot of focus on the whole military assistance area. We were becoming increasingly involved in El Salvador and the Congress was fearful that we were going to become far too involved. The issues of how much military assistance was going to go to El Salvador and what the Congress would permit and what it wouldn't was a very large issue.

Q: Being in ARA at the time of the Reagan administration coming in, over all the years that one is dealing with diplomatic history and the post World War thing, this seems to have been almost one of the most hostile takeovers in ARA. Did you feel that at your level? Can you explain how you viewed this?

JONES: It didn't effect me personally, but I could certainly see it. I think the Reagan administration to a very large extent felt that they were conducting a hostile takeover. They did such extraordinary things like informing Assistant Secretary Bowdler that he was to not be in his office after 12:00 noon on January 20th, he could be somewhere else in the building since he was still in the foreign service and they didn't have the legal authority to kick him out of the service, but he was not to be in ARA for one minute after that—as if he were a traitor or had embezzled funds or something, it was a total failure to understand the professional role of the foreign service. The ironic thing was that so many of us professionals had resented and griped and swore about the Carter administration and its political appointees and the naive and inexperienced behavior in which they all too often indulged. There was by no means a feeling that we were unable to work with the Reagan administration or unable to do what they wanted us to do. I'm sure that there were a lot of foreign service people who voted for Reagan and were delighted to see the change come. But the atmosphere was very much that nobody here could be trusted. Bushnell had been approved by the Carter White House to go as Ambassador to Chile, and

George Landau, who was then in Chile, was to go to Guatemala, and the Guatemalans delayed for months in granting agr#ment for Landau because the Guatemalan military were very hopeful that Reagan was going to win the election and they wouldn't have to take a Carter Ambassador, they could get someone more to their liking. So they finally granted agr#ment the day before the election, knowing that it couldn't possibly go through until after the election. But after the election of course, all plans for people, career and non-career, that Carter had named as Ambassadors went out the window. Bushnell became the Acting Assistant Secretary on Bowdler's removal and was there for the first six months or so and he had some ties to Alexander Haig who was the new Secretary of State. He had known him in some previous incarnation and therefore had hopes that his appointment was going to go through, if not to Chile than to somewhere. But the opposition to him was too intense and did not work out. He eventually went out as DCM in Argentina. Fortunately, the people that the Reagan administration brought in were very good career professionals, I shudder to think what would have happened if we had gotten political appointees, but Tom Enders came in as Assistant Secretary and Steve Bosworth as Principal Deputy. They were extremely good. Enders was responsible for getting through the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI) that is a key component of our economic policies in the Latin American area to this day.

But there were all sorts of people who were injured as a result of the change of administrations. James Cheek who was another Deputy Assistant Secretary in ARA eventually went off as DCM in Nepal. [laughter] Then as Charg# in Ethiopia, there was a long period where we didn't have relations at the Ambassadorial level. Then finally in the Bush administration, which had no interest in the Reaganite grudges, he became Ambassador to the Sudan. Then he was on the verge of retirement and Clinton came in and sent him off as Ambassador to Argentina. The climate of vengeance and politization of appointments at that time was worse than I have ever seen it. Fortunately, the worst elements didn't succeed. There was something called the Santa Fe group that was floating around and had done papers of the most extreme kind of right wing ideas about Latin

America. Although some of their members were kind of tolerated on the fringes of the administration, they never succeeded, thanks to adroit handling by people like Enders, in getting into key policy jobs. At least in State; Defense was another matter.

Q: Did you see in the arms business or anything else the hand of either Jesse Helms or Jeane Kirkpatrick, both of whom were making noises about support for military governments in Latin America?

JONES: Yes, in the summer of 1981, Mrs. Kirkpatrick [who was our Ambassador to the United Nations] decided to do a tour of Latin America, ostensibly for the purpose of consulting on U.N. issues which there was some precedent for, and I got tapped to go with her. They had originally hoped to send one of the Deputy Assistant Secretaries and the one they wanted to send was having a wedding in the family and other people weren't available, so I was asked if I could go. So I followed her around the continent from Venezuela to Uruguay, to Argentina, to Chile, Peru and Ecuador. On a personal level I liked her, she certainly was a very feisty lady, and a very intelligent person as well. A lot of us in the career service had the feeling that we were being whip-sawed by a pendulum. On the one hand we had gone through the Carter administration which in its worst moments and its worst people were pressing to have the most moralistic kind of foreign policy regardless of the interest of the United States, it wouldn't have anything to do with countries it didn't like, even if we had very strong reasons for having something to do with them. Then the pendulum swung to the opposite extreme and here we were with people who seemed to have no moral distinctions at all. [laughter]

Uruguay stands out most sharply in my mind, we had a meeting with I think the acting foreign minister, who took the occasion to complain to Ambassador Kirkpatrick about the presence of a State Department desk officer at some sort of public forum in Washington, in which Uruguayan exiles had participated. I was just burning with the desire to tell him, “It's none of your damn business who a State Department officer associates with in the United States. How dare you try to tell us who we can talk to, and what public events we can

go to." [laughter] But of course I kept my mouth shut and said nothing, and unfortunately neither did Ambassador Kirkpatrick. As far as I know the desk officer did not suffer from that, she didn't try to follow up on it. The desire to restore good relations with these crummy military dictatorships was so strong that the most outrageous kind of comments —the best conversation of all was with the president of Uruguay. Uruguay was at that time in effect a military government, it had a civilian president, but the military was in fact running things. This gentleman was way up in his '80s and he complained about Lech Walesa [the Polish anti-communist leader] because he was a union leader and it was the coming to power of these dangerous labor leaders that was a sign of the decline and fall of civilization. [laughter] Mrs. Kirkpatrick didn't say anything that one either. It was that kind of bizarre thing. We got to Chile (where I later served) and someone who was to become my very good friend, Maximo Pacheco, and some other human rights leaders wanted to call on her at her hotel and she refused to see them.

Q: This is during the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile.

JONES: Yes. I think you could say that for the Latin Americanists it was the most severe test possible of our professionalism. We used to pride ourselves, like all career public servants, on being able to serve the government of the day. But we had never before been subjected to this kind of a swing between the governments of the day [laughter] from night to day, from black to white.

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Q: Today is September 30, 1996. George, let's talk about your impression of how Tom Enders operated and anything dealing with him when he was Assistant Secretary for ARA. JONES: Well, it's a funny thing, I got along very well with the people who inspired the most terror in the State Department. I thought in fact for a long time that I could get along with just about anybody, and we'll come in a few minutes to the time when I found out that was not the case. But John Bushnell who was the senior deputy during the Carter

administration, a lot of people could not get along with and in fact the story has it that some of the enemies he made within the service, subsequently opposed and successfully torpedoed his nomination by President Bush to go as Ambassador to Costa Rica, which I think is disgraceful, but there we are. Tom Enders replaced Bowdler and Bushnell as Acting Assistant Secretary in mid-1981. Enders brought in Steve Bosworth as his principal deputy, who was an extremely nice guy, very popular with everybody. But Enders had a reputation for being very, very demanding to work for, and he was. It became almost a habit—I tried to get home most nights by 7:00, and broke up a car pool over my inability to get out of the office sooner. But when I would get home just as a ritual I would walk in the door at 7:00 and the phone would ring and it would Marge Fitzgerald, Tom's secretary telling me that Tom wanted to speak with me. There he was with some matter or another that he wanted to task me with, or find out the status of. [laughter] It didn't matter to him when—I began to wonder after a while if he wasn't sending me a message that he wasn't supposed to be calling me at home, that I was still supposed to be in the office, then he wouldn't have to go to this trouble. But he never said that, so I kept trying to get home at a reasonable hour. I admired Enders, as I admired Bushnell, I admired both of them tremendously. Both were extremely bright people in a service full of extremely bright people. I think Enders' accomplishments were extraordinary. Enders knew how to move the bureaucracy and get the bureaucracy to go along with the things that he wanted to do. He was largely responsible for the Caribbean Basin Initiative which was sort of sold to the White House as a measure to fight communism in Central America. But it had very little to do with fighting communism and a lot to do with promoting trade ties between the whole Caribbean basin and the United States. I think that he did as well as anyone could in the Malvinas crisis given the suicidal determination of the Argentines on one side and Margaret Thatcher on the other. The Reagan administration came in—one of many chips on its shoulders was that the State Department had stood in the way of the Pentagon and had prevented it from doing many good and noble things including “winning the war in Central America”. So Enders came in aware of this and concerned about the ARA/ Pentagon relationship. It was a matter of some satisfaction to me that although I had been

there during almost the whole Carter administration, I was held over and stayed on for almost a year and a half into the Reagan administration. Because I had built the contacts with the Pentagon and had good relationships through all of the levels at the Pentagon on the military issues affecting Latin America. So the operation was going smoothly and continued to run smoothly despite major shifts in emphasis with the new administration. I was even asked if I would like to head a combination of my office, Regional Political Affairs, and the Policy, Planning and Coordination office. I said yes, but pointed out that the head of PPC, Luigi Einaudi, was a major asset to the bureau and that they ought to find some way to continue to use him if they went ahead with amalgamation. I don't know what the reason was, but they did not go ahead with the amalgamation at that time. Some years later those two offices were combined and are a single office today.

Q: Were you getting any emanations from within the service from our Ambassadors in the field in Latin America to Enders? How were relations with them?

JONES: Of course there were a number of firings and resignations, we talked about this before, because of the transition from Carter to Reagan. Bob White who was the Ambassador to El Salvador resigned very spectacularly, a big blast at the administration, and I think quite unjustifiably. Bob's a friend of mine, but the implication of his statement was that the State Department had to take his recommendations or else and that's never been my view of an Ambassador's role. [laughter] The State Department has an obligation to listen to an Ambassador's recommendations, but nowhere is it written that they have to accept them. Clearly he was not going to be a fit with the Reagan administration under any circumstances and I think he should have quietly left when he was asked to leave.

After the initial shakedown, how did people feel about Enders? I'm not sure that I have any clear feel for that. Frank McNeil, who was my first boss in Costa Rica, I think got along with him very well. The whole history of the Reagan administration is that so much more was going on behind the curtain than in front of the curtain, and I think that had to have been frustrating to a number of the senior people. This was the beginning of the infamous

troika between the Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs and his counterparts in the operations directorate at the CIA, and the NSC at the White House. That group of three is where the really important decisions were being made. The Inter-Agency Group, or IG, had existed for some time as a vehicle for interagency coordination. The Reagan administration came up with something called the Restricted Inter-Agency Group, or RIG - a very suggestive name. But this group of three was an unofficial cabal even smaller than the RIG.

As I said, I think that had to be frustrating to people in the field. Some of the Ambassadors I'm sure, fitted into that better than others. There was one Ambassador in Central America whom I won't name, because I have no way of knowing if this is true or not, he was said to sing a very different tune in messages that were sent through CIA channels to the NSC, than he sang in his open cables that were sent to the State Department. [laughter] Whether true or not, that kind of atmosphere was very characteristic of Central American policy under Reagan.

Q: You said that the Reagan administration had—I mean the people who supported Reagan were claiming that the State Department was sort of restraining the Pentagon, the military, from doing more in Latin America, this was sort of the rhetoric. Yet when Casper Weinberger came in, if there was anything Casper Weinberger as Secretary of Defense became known for later on, it was to make sure that the military didn't do anything that might cause controversy. Was this just right-wing Republican rhetoric, or had the Pentagon been thirsting to do something? And was there any change when the Reagan administration came in, during the time you were there?

JONES: First of all, there were some extreme fringe people who really wanted to intervene militarily, in the style of Guatemala 1954, in Central America. Some of those were kept out of the administration, given consultant positions, like the Santa Fe group that I mentioned before—people floated around the edges of ARA, as consultants, but who never really had anything to do with policy. There were others who were hired, Fred Ikl# at the Pentagon,

and there was a retired General whose name I have forgotten, who was Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, or something like that, who I considered to be very far around the bend. Then what followed (over the entire history of the Reagan administration) was a struggle for power. Tom Enders ultimately fell victim to that, I don't know the inner details of that, and I'm sure its a gross over- simplification, the public version that came to be known. But basically he put his job on the line for a two-track policy in Central America, a policy of yes you increase our military presence, you acquire credibility through additional military presence, but you simultaneously pursue a diplomatic track to work out a solution to Central American problems. The two-track idea was such an anathema to the extreme right-wing, that when he said “Either you support this or you have my resignation,” they said “Let's have your resignation.” The whole history of the Reagan administration was a history of—every Washington administration is full of knives in the back, and bureaucratic maneuvering, but the Reagan administration surely had the championship in that department. Never was there an administration in Washington with as much covert goings-on of all kinds, both official covert and unofficial covert actions going on in every department in the whole administration.

Q: Let's talk a bit about your perspective and experiences on the Falklands...

JONES: Let me add one thing to what I was saying, because I didn't really answer your question. As I've hinted, a lot of the maneuvering was about whether to unleash the military. I shouldn't speak for Tom Enders, but Tom was a professional (I think he was very conservative) and he saw very clearly that there was no military solution to Central America. Perhaps in theory we could have funded another 1954 type intervention, but it might very well have made the problems worse instead of better. Of course he also saw, as we all saw, that it was one thing what the administration wanted and another thing what the Congress wanted. Those of us who were public servants were bound to obey the law, although not everybody on the extreme right took that view. So there was a lot of maneuvering, and I don't think it's unfair to Enders to say that he was among the most skillful maneuverers, he could appear militant, and to be cheering the wilder fringe on,

while at the same time saying quietly, I'm all in favor of this but there is one small problem, there is a law which prevents us from having more than 55 U.S. military advisors in El Salvador. Some practical things were worked out and to some degree I was part of them. Flying people in and out so that you never actually had more than 55 on the ground at any one time.

Q: Enders must have been quite used to this, because we were doing this in Cambodia and in Laos. There were only so many advisors that could spend the night, or something like that. Planes would fly in and then they would fly out again.

JONES: I remember, right at the beginning of the administration, I had a meeting with Richard Burt who was the new head of Political-Military Affairs in the Department, and the purpose was to discuss a U.S. Navy ship visit that was going to be made in Central America. One of the issues related to it was how visible the Marines on board the ship were going to be. I reminded him of the long history of the U.S. Marine Corps in Central America and the Caribbean basin and that if the United States didn't remember it, the Latin Americans certainly did. And he cut off the conversation very sharply by saying “They're going to have to get used to the presence of the Marines because there is going to be a lot more of it.” [laughter]

Q: That's the cute, tough talk that has no pertinence. It sounds great in the Washington board room where you can pound the table, yet in the practical situation it just shows the mind-set.

JONES: It shows a mind-set and he was right. [laughter] Because there was a lot more of military presence in Central America under Reagan. We had those battleships, at an enormous cost we took the Iowa and New Jersey out of moth balls, just so they could sail up and down the coast of Central America and we could look macho. But I think it was the efforts of a lot of very professional people like Tom Enders and Steve Bosworth, to try to keep this within bounds and to keep it from getting totally wild, and above all, to keep

the diplomatic track alive. To keep searching for a political solution to what was a political problem, not a military problem.

Q: Let's turn now to the Malvinas/Falklands crisis, that was 1981, was it? It was early on in the Reagan administration. What role did you play and what you were seeing going on back then?

JONES: Very little. I did a couple of papers, but I was not a central player in that issue. Enders certainly was and his Southern Cone staff, but I was watching it from outside. It was an interesting—if what I think is true, then the role of the military in Latin America has permanently changed. Some historian may find this to be true 50 years from now when he or she writes a book on the period of military dominance in Latin American politics. I think the Malvinas will naturally suggest itself as the dramatic final chapter. It was perhaps not the most meaningful final chapter. I think the military were really brought down by their inability to deal with the economic and social issues that came to the fore in Latin America, as the society changed under them, they found they were no longer able to run it as they were before. But the great dramatic scene in which they overreached was the Malvinas. I remember a reporting cable very early on, it was from our defense attach# in Buenos Aires and he was reporting that all of the foreign defense attach#s had been invited in for a briefing by the Argentine military on the progress of the war against our NATO ally. You could tell that the guy writing this had the feeling that he was trapped in an unreal world. [laughter] The total lack of understanding of the Argentine military, of what they were getting into and where the sympathies of the world community were going to lie, was just extraordinary.

Q: What were you getting from—you were looking at Latin America as the big picture as opposed to one country. On this Falklands/Malvinas thing—the way the Argentine government was going about things was outrageous as far as dealing with its own people, and maybe stupid as far as how they conducted the attempt to seize the islands. Yet it's a Latin American country and you've got the British coming in and exerting their "colonial"

authority over the islands, which has to arose certain passions. But were you getting a public versus a private posture from the other countries? How was this playing, because this was important to us?

JONES: One of the interesting and sometimes baffling aspects of the Latin American world view, is the repeated daily references to the sister republics. A tremendous amount of lip-service is paid in Latin America to their sister Latin American republics. The Spanish in particular, have played to this and there is now an Ibero-American summit that brings together the Spanish, the Portuguese, and the former Spanish and Portuguese colonies, and carefully excludes the Colossus of the North. But, it is both real and unreal at the same time, I think there are ways and circumstances in which there is a real sense of brotherhood of the Latin American community, but when it comes down to anything that really costs money, time and effort, [laughter] countries look at their own particular interests, not some sense of Latin American brotherhood. So yes, there was sympathy for Argentina. It was mostly at the lip-service level. Latin Americans all say Malvinas, they don't say Falklands. They stood together on a vote at the U.N. which doesn't cost anything, a vote with the sister republic of Argentina—but there was no effect on U.S. relations with Latin America as a result of Malvinas. I think the Brazilians and the Chileans were rather pleased if anything, to see Argentina get a comeuppance. Not to mention to see Argentina's military strength reduced.

Q: Yes. Argentineans in a way, don't quite belong to the Latin American club anyway do they? Well, I suppose so, when you think about Chile, it's probably of the same ilk. When did you leave and where were you off to?

JONES: Enders asked me if I would interview with our new Ambassador to Brazil, Tony Motley, to be his DCM, but I talked to my wife and she was not enthusiastic about going to Brasilia, which has a reputation as a very isolated place in the middle of nowhere in central Brazil. She wanted to be closer to the United States because our older kids were moving into college and we wanted to be where the travel back and forth was easier. After I turned

down Brazil, Enders, who was clearly looking around for people who could control or at least counter-balance these political Ambassadors who were being thrust upon him, had me interview with John Gavin, who was Ambassador to Mexico. That one I did actually get to the interview stage with, but I did not “ring Gavin's bells”. Enders, who was considerably frustrated with me by this point, finally asked if I would go as DCM to Costa Rica where yet another political Ambassador was going to be named, so I said yes and we went off to Costa Rica in August 1982.

Q: You were there from August 1982, until when?

JONES: Until July 1985. As it turned out, the first year that I was there was under Ambassador Frank McNeil. Both of us had anticipated that it was going to be a lot less. [time] There was a delay in naming his successor, and I suspect it was because Enders was fighting the appointment, but as a result of that I got a full year with Frank which I was delighted to have. He was a first rate Ambassador and his wife was Costa Rican, which is very unusual. But as a result of that he had total entree to Costa Rican society and knew it backwards and forwards and he was a very confident manager of the embassy as well. So, I could not have asked for a better first year as a DCM.

Q: Can we talk about that first year first? What was the situation in Costa Rica when you got there and what were the American issues?

JONES: We always used to say that Costa Rica was in Central America but not of Central America. Costa Rica is a most unusual Latin American country. The easy pop psychology explanation is that it was settled by small farmers from Spain; if there were slaves brought in there were very few, so you did not have the large plantations and the slave/peasant kind of culture that you got in most of the Latin American countries. You had small farmers who farmed their own land themselves. As a result, you had elected civilian governments, really throughout Costa Rica's history. The Costa Ricans, despite the fact that they are quite a small country, a couple of million people, Costa Rica has had quite a different

relationship with the United States, which was very pleasant for an American to be in. In most Latin American countries you get this love/hate relationship, the chip on the shoulder relationship. Because the Latins have a sense of, the easy word is inferiority but that doesn't quite convey it, that they have not done as well as the United States has done and they resent it, they are quite suspicious that somehow the United States has taken advantage of them in the process, and they are having various kinds of identity crises that make them very assertive about their identity to foreign countries, especially the United States. At the same time, they are very unsure about their identity internally.

Costa Rica has none of that. Costa Ricans are very certain about their identity, very proud of their history and as a result, totally relaxed in dealing with the United States. I've never been in a country where there were as few hang-ups about their relationship with the United States. Costa Rica at that time was THE democracy in Central America. So it was the United States showcase, this was how we would like the rest of Central America to be. To make sure of that we were pouring in a very large amount of U.S. aid. The AID Mission was in the process of being built up at that point and it was already larger than the embassy. I don't remember the numbers now, but it became a huge mission—which created a real problem of exercising any kind of control of it by the State Department. But even though the Central Americans would like to be totally separated from what was going on in the rest of Central America, inevitably they couldn't be, and the United States was also unfortunately not really willing for them to be totally separate. One of their problems is that they have traditionally been a refuge for exiles from the other Central American countries, especially the Nicaraguans with whom they share a border. You had Sandinista refugees living there for years while the Somozas were in power in Nicaragua and then when the Sandinistas came to power you had people from the right, and center, fleeing to Costa Rica. Which of course enormously complicated their relations with Nicaragua. Although the condition of their being there was that they not carry out any kind of subversive activity from Costa Rican territory, that condition became more and more difficult to enforce as time went on.

Q: Let's talk a bit about the AID thing. When you're trying to make a showcase out of a country, sometimes it's "Don't just stand there, do something." It tends to sometimes end up with either crack-pot ideas or overdoing or something like that. In a country of only a couple of million people I would think that this could be, I mean you were worried about the economy of the country. What was your impression of that?

JONES: The view that I have come to is that large amounts of external aid are bad for a country. I think we talked on an earlier tape about the Alliance for Progress and the conviction that I had come to at that time, that President Kennedy's very will intentioned notion that if you simply got together a significant amount of resources and put it into any country, region, area, that would lead to development, was just totally naive and wrong headed. We knew enough by 1982, that if we had been doing things strictly for development reasons we would have known not to try to put the large amounts of money into Costa Rica. But we weren't doing it for development reasons, we were doing it for political reasons. We wanted to support and sustain the Costa Rican democracy and as I said, we wanted to make it a showcase. A lot of the money simply went to support the Costa Rican budget, which means that we had very little to show for it. We were dealing with a Costa Rican administration that I admired greatly for its political skills, the administration of Luis Alberto Monge, but it was not the best administered on the economic side, and I think our aid didn't help it to be better administered, I think it simply gave them —they were able to avoid the consequences of their actions because they had these tremendous amounts of money coming in.

Q: Was this money that was coming in fostering corruption? Did you think that was a problem?

JONES: I would certainly hope that it was not fostering corruption. It was a huge administrative problem because the—I think I talked on the very first tape, I first started off in the government working on the Public Law 480 program, and its great utility as a program is that it generates counterpart. That is, the American wheat (or whatever) is sold

on the local market in country X for local currency and so it produces that counterpart currency. I think that's a very neat and useful tool if you're talking about a limited size program, because you get double bang for the buck - you get wheat for people to eat and than you get local currency to spend building infrastructure. But when we go in with large balance of payments programs as we were doing in Colombia earlier and in Costa Rica at the time that I was there, those US dollar inputs into the Costa Rican budget also generated counterpart. So you had tremendous quantities of Costa Rican currency that had to be programmed. Washington, the U.S. government generally, took very little interest in what happened to the counterpart. Which had its advantages and its disadvantages: one advantage was that the people in the field had a great deal of latitude in how to program it. A disadvantage was that you didn't have the usual amount of supervision from Washington as to what was happening to the money. Washington's viewpoint was that it had spent dollars which went into the Costa Rican government treasury, alleviating their shortage of foreign exchange with which to pay for imports, that's all it was concerned about. It wasn't concerned about what then happened to the Costa Rican currency that was generated. The amounts were so huge that our AID Mission had a real problem figuring out what to do with it all. One of the things that was done with them was at the same time that we were building a new embassy, the AID Mission was building an AID Mission building, considerably larger than the embassy, and about two blocks away. They were building it with this counterpart as one way to use up some of the money. Now of course the AID Mission has been closed down and the building has been turned over to the Costa Rican government, because actually it was Costa Rican money and whatever is done with it is Costa Rican government property. This huge building in this little of town of San Jose, Costa Rica. The Costa Ricans, I think, were very uncomfortable with many aspects of Uncle Sam moving in on it and disturbing their quiet, tranquil, largely agricultural society. As it happens, the AID Director during my time went through a long and very painful investigation by the AID Inspector General that effectively terminated his career. He remained in the service for some years after that, but he never headed another mission. Without knowing any of the details of the case, I feel quite confidant that there

wasn't any corruption in the AID Mission. But I think that the investigation grew out of the large amounts of money that were being handled by the Mission, through the failure of Washington agencies to oversee what was being done with the counterpart, and out of a certain amount of hubris on the part of people in the field, that as a result they could do anything they wanted to with the counterpart. I think all were very well intentioned things, but they may not all have been absolutely consistent with AID regulations. We did lots of scholarships with them, there were some very innovative things which were done with the Costa Rican AID money. I don't want to leave the impression that it wasn't of any use, but it was far our of proportion of what the society could usefully absorb in the time frame that we're talking about.

Q: I'm thinking of an interview that I did early on in this program with Curt Winsor, who was Ambassador to Costa Rica in the early 1970's I think.

JONES: No, he was Ambassador to Costa Rica from the summer of 1983, until February 19, 1985. We're coming to that.

Q: Still during the Frank McNeil time, whom for the record I have interviewed (at least in part, I don't think we've finished). Here you've got the Reagan administration white-hot mad about what's happening in Nicaragua with the Sandinistas. You have a very activist head of the CIA, William Casey, who the feeling was that he would do anything he could, and you've got this state of Costa Rica with a nice long border with Nicaragua. From your perspective—this must have caused a problem, shall we say.

JONES: [laughter] Yes, indeed. When Frank McNeil was there it was less of a problem, because of his superb relations with the Costa Ricans, because of his understanding of what was possible and what was not possible in Costa Rica, and his shrewd management of all the US Government agencies there. I remember the head of CIA for the Western Hemisphere liked to fly around to places in his private aircraft and land at night and go to the Ambassador's residence, never come in to the Embassy itself, but go to the

Ambassador's residence. I remember sitting in on one such meeting with Frank and I don't remember the specifics now, but the gist was, “Can't we push Costa Rica to do more?” and Frank was patiently explaining what the limits were; that Costa Rica's support for democracy was total, but that it did not want to get itself entangled with the “tar baby” of the rest of Central America. In the summer of 1983, Tom Enders' efforts to stave off Curt Winsor's appointment to Costa Rica failed. I think it was about that same time that Tom himself was forced out. Maybe not that was not entirely coincidental, in any event, Curt Winsor arrived. Maybe I should jump ahead in the story and tell the end before I tell the beginning. Toward the end of 1984, after Reagan's reelection, George Shultz went to Reagan and said that he wanted to replace a whole list of Ambassadors who were incompetent in their jobs. The bottom line of it was that either they went or he went. Although Reagan was certainly being pushed by lots of other people to get rid of Shultz, for whatever reasons he didn't want to—either he didn't want the political furor that would be caused or he thought highly enough of Shultz to keep him on, and he agreed to replace these Ambassadors. Funderburk in Romania was one of them.

Q: He's now a Congressman for North Carolina, an extreme right-winger.

JONES: Right. They were all political appointees. They were all people that had been foisted on Shultz by the pressure to name Reaganite Ambassadors. Of course the view in Washington always is that an Ambassador is a very prestigious perk, but it gets them out of Washington. So from the standpoint of all too many senior political people, in all administrations, it doesn't matter how incompetent an Ambassador is, how unqualified he may be, the point is that he's far away in some other country that doesn't matter anyway, and if there is any problem the State Department will take care of it. If it's beyond the beltway it doesn't exist, is the philosophy. But Shultz had had enough. Winsor was one of the ones on this list—I was in a car with him and we were going to some outlying town in Costa Rica for a ceremony at an institute for training of private sector managers (that some of this AID counterpart funding had gone into). It was not the most comfortable car ride in the first place, since our relations were already seriously strained by that point. But

we got a call on the car radio from his secretary saying that the desk officer had called from Washington and had an urgent message to get to him. He asked what the message was and they tried to delay giving it to him, but he insisted on having the message and he was told that the message was that there was a story in the Washington Post that you're among a group of Ambassadors that are being fired. [laughter] That did not improve the rest of the car ride. [laughter] He went up to the U.S. and tried to fight it, he called in all of his political contacts and was unsuccessful. At one point he met with Kenneth Dam, the Deputy Secretary whom he had known previously, and they agreed on a departure date of February 19, and so he came back to the post, and gnashing his teeth began to make arrangements for his departure. Then in came the telegram from the Department (the normal TM-1) authorizing his departure from post and providing the appropriation numbers for his expenses in connection with departure. As these telegrams always do, they don't specify a day of the month they simply specify a month—transfer back to the United States in February 1985. So he decided that this constituted an authorization for him to stay until the end of February, he could depart on February 28, just as well. So the 19th came and went and he was still there and then one fine morning in came a telegram from Kenneth Dam to me, of course Dam did not have the foggiest idea of who I was, but he had been told that somebody named Jones was the DCM. He said that you are authorized to assume charge of the Embassy. [laughter]

Q: Oh God. Oh God. [laughter]

JONES: [laughter] I don't know of any case like this in the Foreign Service.

Q: Well, obviously Dam was mad as hell.

JONES: He was mad as hell, there was no question. [laughter] Of course there was a long series of things which had made everybody in the Department mad as hell at Winsor. This was sort of the last straw.

Q: When did he actually leave?

JONES: He left a few days later. I'm trying to remember—it wasn't a long time, but it was something like a week from the time this telegram came in to the time that he actually departed.

Q: A certain blessing is that February is a short month.

JONES: There you are, [laughter] it couldn't have gone on for too terribly long. [laughter] He called me in and asked me how I was going to handle it, which must have been extremely galling to him. I told him that I wanted to handle it was quietly as I possibly could, which meant that he would stay in his office, and he would stay in his house, he would retain his guards, everything would go on just as it had before. Except that telegrams would have to go out under my name, having been so instructed by the Acting Secretary of State. Also, I had to go over to the Foreign Ministry and explain to the Vice Foreign Minister with whom I had worked closely, that we were trying something new in diplomacy and the Ambassador as he knew was preparing to leave but had a great deal of personal things to take care of and so I was going ahead and taking over the Embassy for all official purposes and the Ambassador would be leaving in a few days. I don't know to what extent he swallowed it, he simply said fine and made no further comment on it. Of course the Costa Ricans read the papers too.

Q: Let's go back to the beginning of when Curt Winsor was named—in the first place could you give me some background on the gentleman and also what you had heard about him before he came. Since apparently there had been some problem of his getting appointed and then talk about the time he was there, not only with him but also the situation.

JONES: Well, I had not heard anything negative. I had heard that the Department was fighting his appointment. The Reagan administration had this very peculiar system of having the State Department nominate a candidate for every post, and the White House

political people would nominate a political candidate and then a battle would ensue. [laughter] I don't know of any other administration that has done it that way, but it just meant that there was always blood on the floor. I have no idea who, but I'm sure that there was some poor soul who was being put forward by the Department as a career candidate for the Costa Rica job. I had not heard anything about Winsor. I knew he was a political appointee, that didn't bother me, and when I saw his curriculum it was impressive. He had in fact been a foreign service officer for four years when he came out of college. He had never served overseas; just as I was, he had been assigned to the Department as his initial tour. I think he did something else first, but then he was put into Congressional relations, that would have been in the Nixon administration. He enjoyed the political contacts that led to. Finally the time came when he was to be assigned overseas and he decided he liked the politics and didn't like the idea of going overseas so he resigned. At one point he was working on Senator Dole's staff. He had a Ph.D. from American University, written on Argentina. He was said to speak passable Spanish. He was a successful businessman, the president of a coal mining company. As I said, it was an impressive resume. The guy was, and is, an extremely nice guy, charming.

Q: Very personable.

JONES: Very personable. We got along very well in the initial weeks. If anything, he was very humble about being new to being an Ambassador, and wanting to be shown the ropes and so forth. It became apparent as we went along that he totally lacked the absolute primary ingredient for being an Ambassador and that is judgment. He simply had no ability to understand the wider ramifications of what he did. Although he had a lot of sympathy and interest for Costa Rica, he never had any understanding of Costa Rica. His whole view of the world was good versus evil, there were guys with white hats and guys with black hats, and he immediately seized onto that, once he identified who were the conservatives and who were the right-wingers in Costa Rica, they became the white hats and all the others were black hats. Very early on there was an incident involving the Costa Rican Minister of Interior, his name was Angel Solano, and Solano was a leftist, there was

no question about it, and once Curt's mind had closed on that fact he decided that Solano had to go and that it was his mission to get rid of him and he began a campaign to do that. Finally I urged him to talk to Fernando Volio who was Foreign Minister, and on the Central American issue Volio was as close to being a hawk as you could get in Costa Rica. So Winsor felt Volio was an ally and someone that we could rely on. He went to talk to Volio and Volio urged him not to do it, not to press the campaign against Solano, that it would simply be counter-productive. So with great regret he dropped that.

Q: Could you explain how an Ambassador conducts a campaign to get rid of a cabinet member?

JONES: He in fact raised it with President Monge. But the question was how hard he was going to press Monge on it, whether he was going to keep on raising it, whether he would begin to hint that there might be consequences for the relationship with the U.S. if he didn't get rid of Solano, etc. It's hard to say whether he actually could have forced it if he had really gone all out, but I think Volio was absolutely right, that even if he had succeeded in getting rid of Solano, the damage he would have done to U.S. relations with the Monge government would have been so severe that it would not have been worth it. So he dropped that issue and I was feeling pretty proud of myself for having gotten through this crisis and still in good relations with Winsor. That I had avoided telling him that this was a stupid, cockamamie idea, I had kept my mouth shut and I had simply urged him to seek advice at the right moment and it all turned out well in the end. But the problems never stopped, there was just one thing after another from then on. Incidentally, Monge eventually did drop Solano from the cabinet, when he saw it was politically possible to do so without appearing to cave under U.S. pressure.

I remember at the very beginning there was an interesting incident in which we received a telegram asking us to obtain landing clearance from the Costa Ricans for a small U.S. government aircraft. It was going to land at a tiny airstrip right up close to the Nicaraguan border. The passengers on board the plane, one of them whose name meant nothing

to me and the other one was Oliver North, which rang a bell and I looked him up and yes indeed there was a Major Oliver North who was on the NSC staff. I'm sure the other guy was CIA although I had no way of checking that. I told Curt that this was extremely unusual and essentially discourteous to the Ambassador that they would propose to come and land on his turf without ever coming through San Jose and briefing the Ambassador and what their mission was, etc., and I also thought that it was very disingenuous not to identify North as an active duty military officer, nor reveal that he was on the NSC staff. He thought that I was absolutely right, so we sent a telegram back saying that before we could grant country clearance we would want the aircraft to first come to San Jose and that Major North and the other traveler should meet with the Ambassador, just to let them know that we had figured out who North was. We heard nothing further. Years later it became perfectly clear that this was one of the very early if not the earliest efforts of North and Casey to find a staging point in Northern Costa Rica for the contra movement against the Sandinistas.

The most important incident of my time in Costa Rica involved the head of the U.S. Southern Command, who at that time was General Paul Gorman, a gentleman very much in tune with Reagan and Casey, unlike his predecessors and successors for all of whom I have the highest respect, I think we had actually an extraordinarily good row of people as heads of the Southern Command, but Paul Gorman was an exception. It gives me some faith in the U. S. military that several of the Southern Command Chiefs have gone on to be head of NATO, thank god Gorman was not one of them. Gorman wanted to carry out some military exercises in Northern Costa Rica, road building in particular, obviously in order to make the Nicaraguans nervous. We'd had some U.S. military civic action kind of things in the past in Costa Rica. There was a well-drilling exercise which had taken place before my arrival and it had been very successful, it was very much welcomed by the Costa Ricans. But this was a far different order of things, I don't recall what the number of the troops was, but it was a significant number of American troops who would be engaged in this exercise, a big engineer detachment and all sorts of ancillary troops.

I'm trying to remember, I think upgrading and extending that airstrip on the border was part of the project as well. Gorman came on a visit to sell this idea, there was a meeting with him and then President Monge gave a lunch. The problem was that neither Gorman nor Winsor—I don't think Gorman had any Spanish and Winsor's Spanish was very limited as I discovered after he arrived. So virtually the only person on the American side who understood what was being said at this lunch was me. There was a Costa Rican interpreter there but the interpreter was not doing a very good job, which in my experience Latin American government interpreters often don't, in translating into a language not their own.

The crucial point was that Gorman wanted the soldiers who were on guard duty around this engineer detachment to be armed and Monge said very clearly at the lunch that the engineering detachment would be welcome but it could not be armed. As a combination of the fact that this is not what Gorman wanted to hear and the fact that the translator did not make it clear, Gorman went away convinced (I didn't realize this at the time because he went directly from the lunch to the airport and I didn't have a chance to talk to him) that he had sold his deal. I talked to Washington on the phone and was told to report this in a NODIS, a no-distribution telegram, which meant that I could not send it to anyone else. This was part of the atmosphere in Washington, because there was so much in-fighting going on and this struggle for power in the Reagan administration, everybody was very anal-retentive about information. Of course there are ways around it and it would have helped in the short run (it wouldn't have helped in the long run) if I had just told our military guy to send the same telegram but send it as a separate telegram to the Southern Command. I didn't do that because it didn't occur to me, I could not conceive of ARA wanting to keep Gorman in the dark on Gorman's issue. So we sent in the NODIS telegram, Winsor was still in his trusting phase and so he accepted my version of what had gone on. So we sent in the telegram with a request that Washington retransmit it to the Southern Command. We found out later that had never been done. So Gorman went on for a long period of time thinking that everything was agreed to in Costa Rica. Then at

some point he found out that it wasn't and apparently went absolutely through the roof and blamed me for it. I found out later, a friend of mine at CIA told me that Gorman had gone to Washington telling everybody that the DCM was sabotaging his project.

I was not at all surprised by what Monge said because it was absolutely consistent with Costa Rica's tradition and views that they would not want armed American soldiers a few miles from the Nicaraguan border. That would have been a clear provocation to the Sandinistas and they did not want to provoke the Sandinistas, who were capable of causing Costa Rica a lot of trouble. The Costa Ricans often told us, “You Americans come and go, but we've got to live with Nicaragua for time eternal, so we are not about to make bitter enemies out of either side in the Nicaraguan conflict. They have lived here in exile before, they will live here in exile again.” You also have to understand that Costa Rica did not have an army, Costa Rica was very proud of the fact that it was the only country with no army. They had a small national police force that performed some army-like functions, border guards for example. In comparison with the military capability of the Sandinistas, they were virtually defenseless. They weren't so confidant of the Americans' ability to protect them that they wanted to go about deliberately provoking a neighbor.

Q: Other than the Oliver North attempt to sort of come in, were there any other things that were going on, vis a vis Nicaragua during Curt Winsor's period ?

JONES: There was lots and lots going on. Not too long after he arrived, the CIA Station Chief changed and we lost an extremely good, extremely competent station chief, and he was replaced by Joe Fernandez who was subsequently to become famous.

Q: He was part of the Iran contra business.

JONES: I don't know to this day whether before he arrived if he was already part of the North/Casey inner circle or if he was gradually brought into it during the course of his time in Costa Rica. There is no question that he eventually got there, he and North are now partners in this company that sells bulletproof vests and other security equipment.

It quickly became clear that there was a lot that Fernandez was up to that the rest of the Embassy had no idea about. As time went on Winsor was—I don't know what Gorman said to Winsor but I'm sure he said something, and Winsor began to lose confidence in me. Somehow I was opposed to all of these good things that he was trying to do and he was getting increasingly frustrated about what was going on in Washington, he was increasingly restive at the leash that he was personally being held on, and the lack of progress in Central American policy generally. He said as much, that he expected that there was going to be a military intervention in Nicaragua during his tour. In fact, he really hoped that it would not be just Nicaragua but that it would be Cuba as well, because he used to go around quoting Alexander Haig saying, “We've go to go to the source.” Everybody knew what the source was. Curiously they chose to forget about Moscow, but Cuba was a lot more “do-able” or they thought it was anyway.

One of the things that really damaged his and my relationship was that in about April 1984, he gave a speech and he was very nervous about public appearances, he didn't do this kind of thing easily, fortunately he didn't give a lot of speeches. There was some forum that invited him to make a speech and both local and foreign press were there. He wrote the speech but didn't show it to anybody in the Embassy or to Washington, which Ambassadors are required to do. I saw it for the first time in the car on the way to the place where he was going to give the speech. He handed it to me to read and I was just appalled. It would have been bad enough if he had talked about just Costa Rica, but he talked about all of Central America, which of course he had no responsibility for. He even brought in Cuba, he had very strong language about Cuba. So he gave the speech and then promptly went out of town and when he got back he found out that I had had USIS type up the transcript of his speech and send it in to Washington as a telegram, and he was clearly startled but he didn't say anything further. He went home and talked to his wife and his wife was very protective of him. I think she told him he needed to read me the riot act, because when he came back the next day he was really upset about my having sent out this speech without his having had a chance to revise it. I said “Mr. Ambassador, the

press was there, they reported on the version that you gave and Washington needs to know what in fact you actually said." He came very close at that point for asking for my removal primarily on the basis of this speech. Finally he decided not to [get rid of me], which I'm sure he came later to regret. [laughter] It was an extraordinary time. There was all of this stuff going on with regard to Nicaragua.

Eden Pastora was one of the exiles in Costa Rica, the leader of one faction of the Contras, and there was an assassination attempt against him, a bomb that went off just a couple of blocks from the embassy. Then there was another assassination attempt, in May 1984, which took place at a Pastora press conference, just across the border in Nicaragua at a place called La Penca, which didn't get Pastora but did kill eight other people. One of them was an American who was working for a little English language newspaper in Costa Rica called the Tico Times. The Tico Times together with a couple of other American journalists concluded that the CIA had done this, that the American government knew more than it was admitting. They started a long, long, campaign to expose what was being hidden, what was really behind all of this. The Embassy (I was charg# at that point) found out at some point in the night that some kind of incident had occurred in southern Nicaragua and that there were potentially Americans involved. It was not until the next morning that we were able to get somebody up into the area — the Costa Rican side of the border, we of course could not cross into Nicaragua — to find out what had happened and to confirm that there were Americans at the press conference. I think by that time this one American was dead, she had initially survived the blast, but had died of loss of blood before—they were miles and miles away from any kind of medical attention. The injured, a dozen or more, had to be put into a little motor boat and brought back across the river into Costa Rica. We had considerable turbulence going on outside of the embassy and considerable turbulence going on inside it as well. [laughter] The probable perpetrator was identified pretty quickly, a man using a false Danish passport who disappeared immediately afterwards. The issue was who was he working for. To us, it was obvious that those who most wanted to get rid of Pastora were the Sandinistas, and about ten years

later that was confirmed. But for a long time there were journalists who argued it was the CIA. One of the allegations that the Tico Times found most persuasive was that I had not made any requests for helicopters to come flying up from the Southern Command in Panama to rescue these Americans who possibly, but not for certain, were in this really remote place out in the jungle, in another country, at night.

Q: One of the problems almost always of the Deputy Chief of Mission, particularly when you have a political appointee as Ambassador, but even in other cases—if you have an Ambassador who is straying off of the reservation, you might say, there is a conflict. You've got American interests and then you have the integrity of your relationship to the Ambassador. Was this being strained?

JONES: Yes, it was being strained. At one point I met with Tony Motley (who replaced Enders as Assistant Secretary) shortly after Motley had come into the job and he said that when he was Ambassador in Brazil the thing that he most prized in his DCM's was a loyalty. His second DCM was certainly loyal to him, because he resigned from the foreign service when Motley left government and joined Motley in his private consulting firm. [laughter] But Motley also said that if there was ever anything that should come up that he should know about, all I had to do was pick up the phone. [laughter] Q: Oh boy, talk about a double set of instructions.

JONES: Wow! I never took him up on that, I never tried to call Motley directly. What I was torn by was the feeling that I had an obligation to the Department of State as an institution, to keep it informed, to tell it what it should know about what was going on in Costa Rica. I was once talking to Winsor on some subject and I referred to “our masters in Washington,” a phase I chose deliberately just to see how he would react, and he looked at me with the most puzzled expression on his face. I think that part of his problem was that he thought that he worked exclusively for Reagan.

Q: Some political Ambassadors take this very much to heart. It just ain't the way the system works.

JONES: Yes. He was very close to Constantine Menges who was Reagan's National Security Advisor for Latin America and who interestingly in the end felt betrayed by Oliver North as well, because so much was going on that North wasn't telling Menges. [laughter] Every telegram of importance he [Winsor] used to slug, “NSC for Menges.” I remember being told by the Director of Central American Affairs, “For God's sake, can't you get the Ambassador to stop slugging telegrams for Menges? If he wants to send to them to the NSC as an institution that's fine. But to slug them personally for the guy who is the single greatest thorn in ARA's side, whom ARA calls the 'constant menace,' does not do the Ambassador any good with the Department.” The Ambassador could have cared less whether it did him any good to the Department. [laughter] His relations not only got to be bad with me, they got progressively worse with the Department as an institution, and with Motley as Assistant Secretary. Because there were a series of occasions when Motley called him on the carpet, both on the phone and when Winsor went to Washington. He finally told him “No more press conferences.” Winsor went right ahead and gave a press conference and Motley called me one day and said “Where is the Ambassador?” and I said “He's at the residence giving a press conference,” and he said “God Dammit, I told him not to ever give another press conference. Transfer this call to the residence.” [laughter] So I did and he interrupted him in the middle of the press conference and reamed him out and Winsor went back into the room and gave the rest of the press conference. It was not a pleasant 19 months being DCM to Curt Winsor. I think that if he had been somebody I could detest it would have made it easier, but as I said at the beginning, he was a very likable guy and he had fine children, and you couldn't help feeling sorry for the guy who was just in so far over his head in this major arena for American foreign policy.

Q: We've talked about the Gorman visit, were there any other major things that happened which reflect how we dealt with things in Costa Rica during this period?

JONES: We talked about the abortive effort to get rid of the Minister of Interior which went on for weeks., and Gorman's efforts to get American military forces into the area near the northern frontier.

Q: They never came, did they?

JONES: No, they never came. Gorman said over and over again (as if this were the convincing point) that he could not send American troops into this dangerous area without being able to protect them. And it was his responsibility as Commander-in-Chief to have them protected and he seemed to think that was the end of the argument and the fact the Costa Ricans viewed it differently didn't seem to have any relevance or importance to him. It was an impasse that never got resolved.And the Pastora assassination attempt, those were the three most dramatic things that happened during this period.

Another one toward the end of Winsor's period was the effort to put up a Voice of America transmitter, not right up into the border area but close enough to Nicaragua—the objective was so that it could be heard clearly in Nicaragua on a medium wave, to supplement the Voice of America's short wave broadcasting, to broadcast on regular AM frequencies so that anybody with any kind of radio in Nicaragua could hear the VOA. That was in fact built, the Costa Ricans agreed to having it built. Part of the reason was that we didn't propose to protect with anything other than civilian security guards. That led to another long Winsor battle with Washington because he said that the site could be easily overrun. I suppose it was not impossible that there could have been a Sandinista commando unit infiltrated into Costa Rica, that they certainly could have done. At a minimum he wanted to issue the guards AK-47's or the equivalent, and Washington wouldn't hear of it. He had a hard time understanding this, but I think the Washington strategy was that they would have been very happy if the Sandinista's had actually attacked this tower out in the middle of

nowhere, in the middle of a Costa Rican cow pasture. Because it would have given them another excuse to do something against Nicaragua, so they didn't care how well it was protected. Those I think were the major issues.

Q: If I recall, and it's been seven or eight years since I've done my interview with him, he was quite proud of helping Costa Rica get away from government projects into private projects. Does that make any sense or not? Moving Costa Rica more into the private sector, away from the sort of socialist type of things.

JONES: There was nothing dramatic or major in that area, because there wasn't a huge amount of the Costa Rican economy that was in the state sector to begin with. Some of the AID money did go into strengthening the private sector, which was certainly a good thing. This institute for the training of businessmen for example that I mentioned, was one of AID's creations. I don't think that there was any major change, I suspect that whatever the percentage is that's in the state sector in Costa Rica is probably pretty much the same today as it was in 1983.

Q: Why don't we finish up with this time? Curt Winsor left in February 1985. How long did you stay on?

JONES: I stayed as charg# until July, I left the day after the 4th of July party in 1985. Jim Tull replaced me as DCM and as charg#, he arrived on July 4 and took over the next day. The new Ambassador was Lou Tambs, another political appointee who had been Ambassador in Colombia and Jim Tull had been his DCM, so he brought him with him to Costa Rica. During those five months the main thing that I tried to do, was to pull the embassy back together. The removal of the Ambassador and all of the bitterness and tension that surrounded it was obviously very corrosive to the morale and efficiency of the embassy. So what my wife and I tried to do for the next five months was just to get everybody calmed down and working together as a team again, and to take all of this tension and antagonism out of the air. He tried to get rid of a lot of people, he did get rid of

the Economic Counselor, he tried very hard to get rid of the public affairs officer and it was not an easy time for a lot of people, not just for me.

Q: You left in July 1985, where did you go then?

JONES: I went to Santiago, Chile as DCM. As it turned out, I was charg# there until November. I spent most of 1985 as charg# at one embassy or another.

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Q: Today is October 29, 1996. George, with "DCM-ships" usually the Ambassador has to pass on you—was there any of that? How did you get the job?

JONES: Actually around the end of 1984, I got a phone call from someone in personnel asking me if I would be the Department's candidate for Ambassador to Belize. I thought it over and turned it down, and subsequently, I'm very glad that I did. One of the problems was that this was the Reagan administration and the Reagan administration had this system of having the Department put up a foreign service officer candidate for every Ambassadorship and then there would be what I would call a battle, I suppose the White House would have called it an evaluation of merits, between the FSO and the political appointee whom the White House had tapped for that particular post. Surprise, surprise, the FSO usually lost, and I knew lots of cases where people sat around waiting for months doing nothing, while the decision was fought out as to whether they or the political appointee were going to go. I didn't know it at the time, but some instinct had warned me, that the guy that the White House had tapped for this post was an assistant secretary named Jim Malone, he was the assistant secretary for oceans, environment and science.

Q: I remember running across him one time. He had a reputation of being a terrible administrator, he couldn't make up his mind.

JONES: I never met him or had anything to do with him directly, but he was eased out of that position by George Shultz. Some compensation had to be given and the best that Shultz would permit was for him to go to Belize. He turned out to have a major confirmation problem, and it took over a year before he finally withdrew his candidacy. I could have been sitting there that whole year as the candidate in waiting. [laughter] So I'm very glad I turned that down, and I knew having turned down an offer of an Ambassadorship, I wasn't going to be offered another. So what I could hope for was a good DCM job, fortunately my name was put forward to Harry Barnes who had been handpicked by George Shultz to go as Ambassador to Chile. Harry had been our Ambassador in India, to go from being Ambassador from India to Chile could be viewed in some quarters as a “come down”, but Shultz was quoted as saying that “Harry had done an incredible job in turning around our relations with India” and he [Shultz] was very concerned with the lack of progress toward democracy in Chile and he wanted a first-rate, very strong U.S. Ambassador to go there. I had never met Barnes, but fortunately there was an ARA Chief of Missions conference at Homestead Air Force Base in Florida in March of 1985, and as charg# in Costa Rica I was asked to come. Harry went as Ambassador-designate to Chile and he interviewed me while we were there for this conference. Subsequently, he called me from India, it was probably my first tip-off to Harry's incredible energy and activity level, that he called me in Costa Rica sometime later and asked me what time it was there and then he told me it was 1:00 in the morning in India, and I was astonished that he would be conducting business at 1:00 in the morning. I subsequently learned not to be astonished, Harry conducted business every waking moment. [laughter] He offered me the job and I was delighted, I liked what I had seen and heard of him, and although I had never been there, I knew Chile was a beautiful country and the political situation was challenging. So off we went. I had about a month's leave and got to Chile in August 1985.

Q: You were in Chile from when to when?

JONES: From August 1985 until May 1989. I had hoped to have a little longer leave, but Wade Matthews, whom I replaced, sent me a telegram and pointed out that if I arrived after August 11, he would have to do new efficiency reports on everyone. Because you have to do new ones if it has been 120 days from the end of the last rating period, that was almost the only argument that he could have used that would have persuaded me, since I hated to do them myself and would not have wanted to have to do unnecessary ones. I said okay, I would be there August 10. I also didn't anticipate that I was going to be charg# for very long, but one of the famous things about Harry is that he is a linguist, I've forgotten how many languages he spoke, it was six or seven or eight. He used to send telegrams in other languages off to people in the service that he knew, and the communications room would have to cope with them. [laughter] Just to keep his hand in. One of the languages that he didn't have was Spanish and he wanted to be fluent in Spanish before he came, so he took a substantial course of Spanish. He was also engaged in seeing everybody that he could in Washington, including everybody that he could on the Hill to make sure that his support was firm, that he understood what the objectives of U.S. policy were and what parameters he could operate in. As a result of all of this, he didn't get to Chile until November 1985. So I had three months as charg# and it was—any time in those years would have been a tense, exciting, challenging time. Because the democratic forces in Chile were increasingly frustrated and despondent about ever forcing Pinochet out.

Just after I arrived they concluded what was called the National Accord, which was an agreement among all of the political spectrum, except for the far right and the far left, which had been reached under the aegis of the Cardinal and spelled out the kind of moderate political program that they would follow if they were in power. The idea was to provide some reassurance and some counterweight to the assertions of Pinochet and his supporters that if the civilians were ever allowed back into power they would be a bunch of wild-eyed radicals who would lead the country right down the course of Allende and ruin the country again. So this was a very significant development because the parties in any country often are—they had done a lot of quarreling among themselves and it was

very difficult for them to get together. There was a lot of disagreement about what the right strategy was for dealing with Pinochet and so on. It was very difficult for them to get together and it was a considerable achievement, that they had finally agreed on this document and they had signed it very formally in the presence of Cardinal Fresno.

Q: Was there anything about an amnesty for crimes committed, in order to keep the military happy?

JONES: That was later, that was a major issue later on, but at this point the civilians seemed so far from power and Pinochet so secure that wasn't even an issue. Although there was intense interest generated by this document and the Embassy did a lot of reporting on it, it swiftly became clear that Pinochet had no intention of paying any attention to it. He had a famous meeting when the Cardinal went to see him, just before Christmas...

Q: This was the Cardinal of Santiago, as opposed to the papal nuncio?

JONES: The Archbishop of Santiago who happened also to wear a Cardinal's hat, Juan Fresno, one of many, many Chileans for whom I hold great admiration, but certainly the only Cardinal that I ever spent any amount of time with. He was not a very political Cardinal, his predecessor, Cardinal Silva, who was still alive but had retired from active church duties, was a much more aggressively political priest. That was not Fresno's nature at all, I don't think he liked the limelight, he didn't like controversy all that much. But he felt increasingly that it was his obligation to try to bring about reconciliation in Chile and it was clear to him as to almost everybody outside of the military that the only way you could have a reconciliation was if you restored democracy. You could not have reconciliation in the context of a military dictatorship. So Harry and I had a lot of meetings with him to talk about how things were going and what the right strategy was and so on. When Fresno saw that Pinochet wasn't responding in any way to the national accord, he paid a courtesy call just before Christmas and Pinochet let it be known that Fresno had asked him about he

National Accord and he responded by saying “We have turned the page.” Meaning that was a closed book and he had no intention of doing anything about it.

Chile was another - like dealing with Curtin Winsor, like being a desk officer - of those exposures of mine to the fact that the Department of State never tells you what to do. [laughter] In some senses I've experienced this through my whole career, I mean from the very first day that you come on board you're given a desk and paper is thrust at you and you're kind of expected to figure out what to do with it. Officially we call it on-the- job training. [laughter] In my case, I came on before FSI had practically anything in the way of training programs. But even today, the amount of training in what you're expected to do, I think is incredibly minimal in the Foreign Service of the United States. In 1985, here I was being sent off to be charg# in Chile, Ambassador Theberge had left a few days before I got there, Matthews was charg# and I was replacing him as charg#. The Department knew that for some unspecified period of time I was going to be charg#, conducting our relations with Chile, you would have thought that somebody would have said something to me about what their expectations were, what our policy line was. [laughter] I did have a meeting with Elliot Abrams who was just coming in as Assistant Secretary and got the sort of feeling from the conversation and what I knew about his record in his previous job as Assistant Secretary for Human Rights, that he was sympathetic to the return of democracy to Chile. But no instructions as to how to go about it, nothing about how far we were prepared to go and specifically, how hard we should press Pinochet. What was at stake here was if you—normally in any country, you seek to keep a good relationship with the government to which you are accredited, but you are at the same time, pressing them to do any number of things that the U.S. government wants them to do. Keeping these two things in balance is not normally a difficult problem, but if what you are pressing them to do is to leave power, keeping good relations and a smooth working relationship becomes a little more difficult. There was an obvious neat calculation to be made here, which as far as I could tell, the Ambassador and I were to make on our own. Now maybe Harry got more precise guidance from the higher levels that he had access to than I did. I decided that

my first job was to get to know everybody, which turned out in Chile, to be a statement in itself. Because if you met with the opposition and you got to know the opposition, that was immediately a subject of criticism by the government, you were wasting time with these unsavory characters who didn't have the sense to respect what General Pinochet had done for Chile. I didn't try to distinguish across the political spectrum, as to who I met with, and I found that everybody was curious to see the new man at the U.S. Embassy.

You know, I think if the Ambassador had shown up in two weeks, nobody would have paid any attention to me. But as weeks stretched into months and I was the only game in town, there was a proliferation of interest in trying to figure out what was going on at the US embassy and with US policy and so forth.

Q: George, it must have been difficult to sort of explain what US policy was. For example, you had our Ambassador to the United Nations, Jeane Kirkpatrick, I guess she was still there wasn't she, or had she left? Anyway her aura was still around in which she said sort of they're good dictators and we shouldn't insult them or something like that. Pinochet obviously being one of her top candidates for that.

JONES: In fact she had visited Chile, I had visited Chile with her. I said I hadn't been in Chile before, and that's not true. I was there briefly in her entourage in 1981, and she had refused to meet with anybody in the opposition for fear of offending our friends in the Chilean government. And you had lots of other cases. Ambassador Theberge had a record of being very cozy with Pinochet's government. At the very end, one of his last official acts, he gave a speech, I think it was on Lincoln's birthday or maybe it was dedicating a bust of Lincoln. He used the occasion to make quite a good speech that made the case for democracy, but it was about the only occasion on which he was outspoken. I guess he, like others in the Reagan administration, was growing frustrated with the lack of progress.

Q: What was Theberge's background?

JONES: He was an academic as I recall. I don't recall from where.

Q: Had he been making contacts around the political spectrum?

JONES: He had some contact with the opposition, but it was... He was pursuing the first Reagan administration ('81-'85) policy of you achieve what you want with these dictators by not offending them. You don't gratuitously offend them; you seek to have good relations with them, and that makes you more acceptable and therefore more persuasive in moderating their conduct. Well... I suspect my tone suggests what I think of that. It certainly didn't work in Chile. It got absolutely nowhere. Pinochet I don't think was ever moved by roses or thorns, neither by promises nor threats. He was one tough cookie and we will talk in a moment about what in fact led to his downfall, but it was not the tone of American pressures on him. My friend Tony Motley paid a visit in the spring of '85 just before he was pushed out as Assistant Secretary, and made a famous statement. The problem was that Pinochet controlled the press. He controlled by controlling the licensing and newsprint, he controlled which papers existed. Those papers that existed were kept on a tight leash, and it worked because most of them were in debt and could be threatened with sudden foreclosure. The famous Chilean newspaper El Mercurio, for example, had gotten badly into debt. You sometimes read about Pinochet's economic miracle. I always bristle whenever I read that because in fact there was a Pinochet crash in the early 1980's when most of the Latin American economies were getting into trouble. He did bring in good economic advisors after that and subsequently began to turn the economy around.

Q: These were the so-called Chicago boys?

JONES: The Chicago Boys were actually the ones who got him into trouble. The Chicago boys were doing a number of good things—so called because they were all graduates of the University of Chicago—but their great mistake was that they insisted on a fixed absolutely immovable exchange rate. The theory being that it would squeeze the inflation

out of the Chilean economy. They had, like many right wing economists, an absolute obsession with avoiding inflation. This was particularly understandable in Chile because one of the huge causes of dissatisfaction with Allende was the incredible inflation that his policies had brought about. They got rid of most of the inflation, but they wanted to get rid of more, and they thought the way to do that was to maintain a fixed exchange rate. A lot of people borrowed in dollars on the government's assurance that the rate was never going to change, and when the day came that it became impossible to maintain a fixed rate, devaluation occurred, and people found themselves owing several times what they had originally borrowed in terms of Chilean pesos. This was among the reasons why the newspapers were either controlled or subject to pressure by the government. So the government could take a phrase out of something someone said and hang them with it. Tony Motley was hung by a phrase, one thing he said in the context of a several day visit, many statements and press conferences and so on. I can't remember now the question he was asked, but part of his answer was that Chile was in good hands. What he was trying to say was that the Chilean people could determine the future of Chile; the future of Chile was in their hands. But that simple phrase, was interpreted to mean that Chile was in Pinochet's hands and those were the good hands. There was a lot of reason for the right wing in Chile and for Pinochet to believe that the Reagan administration was their friend and if not totally on its side could be manipulated not to give it any serious trouble.

But the desire to check out the new faces in the embassy even got to the point where the first daughter invited me over. Pinochet's adult daughter, in her '30s I guess, considered to be very politically powerful. He had a son who was of not much account. His wife supposedly didn't care very much about politics and was not very much involved with it. But his daughter was supposed to be his closest advisor, and in fact went with him to a lot of functions and was seen with him constantly. A call came from one of her aides asking me to come over and discuss some cultural foundation that she was involved with. Since it was supposedly cultural and it was a family thing, I took my wife with me. We went to call on her and of course what it was really about was on behalf of Pinochet whom at that

point I had never seen; it was to find out more about me and what kind of an animal I was, also to quiz me about the Ambassador. I remember in particular she asked me why had the United States decided to send an ambassador who had no previous experience in Latin America and didn't even speak Spanish. So I explained to her who Harry Barnes was and what his career record had been and what his fame as a linguist was and by the time he got to Chile, he would be speaking Spanish. It was a fascinating encounter. It was the first and only time I ever had a meeting with the daughter, and it was my first exposure to the Pinochet family and to the incredible arrogance of the Chilean right. It wasn't just the Pinochet family. A lot of the Chileans I met were among the finest people I've met anywhere, but the right wing in Chile is something else. It is further right and more absolutely confident of its divine right to rule the country than anywhere else I know.

Q: Is this just military or...

JONES: Oh no! The military in Chile, like the military everywhere else, was the hardest possible target for the embassy. The military is important in Latin America; it always has been. Its importance is now somewhat diminished, but in all the countries I served in, the military was always important, except in Costa Rica which doesn't have one. You would always want to know more about what the military was thinking, what their views were, what their intentions were, and you had very little information from any source to go on. The military simply would not discuss politics with foreigners. Particularly in Chile, you could do some skirmishing with them. Sometimes on rare occasions you could get a military officer to engage in a little debate with you, but you couldn't tell whether they were making the officially designated debating points or were they saying what they really believed, so you didn't come away any wiser after that.

Q: Our attach#s didn't have a good in there?

JONES: No. Our military attach# system doesn't really function, at least in Latin America, at all. I can't speak for the rest of the world. Where we had very good people, they were

usually in the MilGroup system, the US Military Group, the technical advisors. John Taylor, who was head of what we called the Office of Defense Cooperation in Costa Rica and George Carpenter who was head of our military group in Chile were first class people and far more aware politically and plugged in to what the military was thinking than the attach#s were. (In fairness Carpenter later became Army attach# in Argentina.) One of the absurdities that every foreign service officer has to deal with is that the Department of Defense, the Defense Intelligence Agency, has divided up the world among the three services so that every service has an equal share, no service is favored more than another. The absurdity in Chile was that Chile was assigned to the US Navy. Now in Chile as in every other country in Latin America, the overwhelmingly important military service was the army. The one you most wanted to know about was what the army was going to do. The army was always the largest service, had the most troops, the most physical as well as political clout. But the DOD system was absolutely impossible to change. I'm sure that many ambassadors have thrust their lances at that windmill and lost. But Harry, as usual, faced with a rigid system, knew how to work within it. He brought in a navy captain who had served under him in India, a very good man named Peterson. These people I've named did the best they possibly could to get some information and did get some useful things just not very much because the military was so damned impenetrable.

There always has been in Chile a very strong right. There was a conservative party in the 19th century which was very strong and they regularly elected presidents and had a significant share of the vote of the Chilean electorate. Even the moderate conservatives in Chile felt the country owed the military a debt for having saved them from Allende, that the worst possible thing to happen to Chile, far worse than Pinochet, would be a return to someone like Allende and though the more moderate ones among them would like to see more movement toward democracy, they were terribly concerned that it not go so fast as to be destabilizing, that it proceed in a carefully controlled manner so as to minimize the chance of the wrong people getting control of Chile once again. The Allende experience was an absolutely searing one for everybody outside of the extreme left. Of course what

followed Allende was absolutely searing for the extreme left, so everybody in Chile was still wearing the scars. But the less moderate members of the right were pro-Pinochet and proud of it and were extraordinarily contemptuous of anyone who didn't share their point of view. I got to know that well sort of by default and sort of by—I'm trying to decide whether to say by direction of the Ambassador would be accurate or not. Harry certainly knew everything I did, and I think he felt I was doing the right thing. I sort of became the embassy's emissary to the right, a role I was not always comfortable in. In the process of seeing everybody in those first months I had gotten to know people on the right as well as most other sectors. Once the Ambassador was there the leaders of the opposition gravitated toward the Ambassador as they should. The political section was also heavily involved in keeping up with what the opposition was doing. The niche that was left for me to fit into was to try to maintain a channel open to the right and explain to them what we were doing and why we were doing it and why we felt it was important to do it and not cause them to feel totally cut off. They came to be very bitter toward the Ambassador, bitter toward the United States. It was a very difficult relationship, but I think an embassy has to have its antennae out to all sectors in society.

Q: Oh yes. Well now these initial months when you were there, when you were the Charg#, I'm sure people were approaching you from all sectors saying Se#or Jones, please tell me where does the United States stand on things and here you are with no instructions. And always the problem is if you come with an ambassador whom you don't really know at all, you don't want to set any course that he might have to disavow or set it right. Also this is not a benign country, this is not a place where we haven't been seared by the whole Allende thing too, in the American political spectrum. What did you do?

JONES: What we said publicly was of course carefully coordinated with Washington. What we said on the National Accord was in fact said in Washington, drafted by the Office of Southern Cone Affairs and issued by the Department spokesman, and we simply publicized it in Chile. We didn't say anything on our own publicly.

What we said privately—it is a little hard to separate in my mind now what we might have said at various stages because I suspect that some evolution took place over time. When asked what we desired for Chile the answer was always we would like to see Chile return to democracy. You would usually then be asked, “How do you define democracy? Are you going to insist that it be American-style democracy on American terms or are you going to let us design our own Chilean democracy?” So we would debate for five minutes or five hours how you define democracy and how you can tell when you have a democracy and when you don't. Something had occurred in Chile prior to our getting there which at the time did not seem terribly significant and I'm sure the embassy didn't know the full story at the time either. It only came out later. But in the late 70's, Pinochet had come under a lot of pressure to have a constitution. He'd been operating without a constitution. There was a military junta which issued decrees. The pressure was coming from that same right wing that although perfectly happy with Pinochet and what he had done, wanted more of the traditional trappings of the Chilean republic and wanted to be able to say they were a constitutional republic. They didn't like having Chile referred to all around the world as a military dictatorship. So he finally agreed and a group of his most trusted civilian advisors were selected to draft a constitution. His instruction to them for the first draft or whatever was that on adoption of the constitution, Pinochet would become the constitutional president of the republic for a term of 16 years.

Q: Good God!

JONES: His term would just be coming to an end this year. As this got discussed among his advisors, they got increasingly nervous and finally got up the courage to say to him that they were concerned that this would be a public relations disaster and therefore wouldn't achieve the whole purpose of having a constitution, which was to improve Chile's image, and that it might even endanger approval of the constitution which was going to be via a plebiscite. So they argued with him and finally got him to agree to divide it in half and he would have an eight-year term. At the end of eight years, in October 1988, there would

be another plebiscite which would vote yes or no on the question, “Do you wish President Pinochet to continue for a second eight year term until 1996?” That's what was written in the constitution that was adopted in 1980.

When I arrived in Chile, and even before in 1984, the opposition focus was on trying to force some immediate change in the circumstances of how Chile was governed, force him to restore a Congress or permit elections or move in some way toward greater democracy in Chile. As time went on, it became evident to everybody that nothing was going to convince him to do this. The opposition had tried demonstrations; they had tried every kind of rally and strike, all the statements coming from the U.S. Government, nothing was having any effect. The opposition became extremely demoralized by the rejection of the National Accord. After that the spirits of the opposition went into a long decline because there just seemed no hope of anything. As October 1988 came closer, it became evident that there was a potential for forcing Pinochet to do something. There was one lever that he, himself, had given everybody, which was to defeat him in the plebiscite. When we pointed that out to the opposition, many of the opposition leaders said, “You've gotta be kidding. You think Pinochet is going to let us win the plebiscite? You don't know this man. We've lived with him all these years. He had outmaneuvered, manipulated, tricked the United States Government, every United States Ambassador, all of us, the Cardinal. Look how he embarrassed the Cardinal. The Cardinal went to see him and he brushed him off. There is absolutely no way. What you're suggesting is ridiculous. We will boycott the plebiscite. It is a sham and a hoax.”

But what our policy became in Chile, in 1986-88, was to encourage the opposition to participate in the plebiscite and to make every effort they could possibly make to win it. We devoted some resources to helping them win it, both through direct grants from AID and grants coming from the National Endowment for Democracy to the National Democratic Institute. We provided funding for a number of different efforts related to participation in the plebiscite. As time grew near for the plebiscite, some of the opposition leaders decided to give it a try: two political leaders in particular who were crucial. The Christian

Democrats, who had always been the largest single party in Chile, had an internal election in July 1987, and Gabriel Valdes who had been the leader of the Christian Democrats was replaced by Patricio Aylwin. Valdes had leaned toward those who thought Pinochet was invincible. Aylwin was prepared to do battle. The other key player was Ricardo Lagos who was a US-educated Socialist. One of the things we had trouble with in the embassy was reestablishing relations with the Socialists. The Socialist Party in Allende's time was closely allied with the Communists. There were various factions of the Socialist Party who in the US Government view were still, in 1987, hand in glove with the Communist Party. There were great qualms about dealing with the Socialists. But we established good relations certainly with all the Socialists who were in Chile. The more extreme ones were in exile in any event. In fact the Socialists had their own internal problems in deciding how to proceed, to the point that it proved impossible to get a unified socialist party because of its many splinters, let alone get any agreement on a joint course of action. Lagos then went out and formed his own new party called the Party for Democracy, the PPD. Great choice of name. To do it he had to go through a very complicated and tedious process collecting signatures to get the party legalized. Everybody, both Socialists and other opposition leaders, said it can't possibly be done. Pinochet will execute anybody who signs your petition. Even if people sign the petition he'll find some technicality; he won't recognize it. Lagos went out, did it, got all the signatures, met all the legal requirements, and lo and behold they were recognized.

One of the interesting questions is to what extent did the United States help? There is a very large extent to which these things would have happened anyway with or without our presence. We certainly provided some moral support and encouragement at their very darkest moment when they were most discouraged.

Q: Tell me George. You say we. There must have been some talk up in Washington with the new Ambassador coming in and all about what do you do about this, I realize the

Ambassador wasn't that new at this point, but how was the decision reached of saying let's go for it or was there no other choice at hand in a way?

JONES: There seemed to be a, if there was a formal decision process, I don't know what it was but somehow there was a coming together of minds. Mike Durkee was director of the Office of Southern Cone Affairs during the first part of our time in Chile and he was an absolute tower of strength. Elliott Abrams in the public statements that he was making about Chile was much more clearly pro-democracy, and more willing to go on the record about it, than any of his predecessors had been. So I may have been uncertain at the beginning about how much support the Embassy had in Washington, but as time went on, statement after statement from the Assistant Secretary left no doubt about where we stood. We even got some statements by Reagan. Every so often he would say something, something would be put in front of him that he would agree to, that we could quote about the importance of democracy. As I recall he made one or two specific Chile- related statements. There were some staff members at the White House who were pushing advocacy of democracy as an element of Reagan administration foreign policy, among other things because of its utility in Central America. It made our Central American policy much more defensible if we could say we were for democracy everywhere whether it was right wing or left wing governments we were talking about. So there was a great consensus of minds. I mean you can view it as a sudden shift in American policy, but I think it is more realistic to view it as an evolution of policy over time. I think Tony Motley returned from that 1985 trip feeling very frustrated at his inability to get through to Pinochet and his advisers. It was his last try at private reasoning with the Pinochet government, and all he got for his pains was the exploitation of that out-of-context quote. I think even had Motley stayed on as Assistant Secretary there would have been a continued movement in the same direction. Abrams did it a little faster, maybe a little more publicly than Motley would have done, but I think that everybody except for the extreme right wingers in the administration, and there were fewer of them in the second Reagan administration than in the first, was feeling that the time had come, we had waited long enough in Chile. We had

waited since 1973 for the military to give up what everybody had viewed as a temporary interruption in civilian government in Chile. The temporary interruption had now gone on for 15 years and it was high time that something was done about it.

Q: How did Harry Barnes when he came there, how did he take command of the situation?

JONES: His view was that you had to, the American Ambassador had to demonstrate publicly where our sympathies lay. He didn't do this by public statements. He didn't talk much to the press; he held very few press conferences. He talked to the American press, but he didn't do much talking in Chile. He left that to me. I did a lot more of that than he did. By doing it publicly, I mean by his public actions. He went to call on Gabriel Valdes, the leader of the Christian Democrats, shortly after he had arrived. He had of course presented his credentials to Pinochet and met with the Foreign Minister and other major government officials. The Valdes visit greatly irritated the government. We hadn't realized that it was going to irritate the government so greatly that he would do this before he had called on every single one of the ministers in the government. We were showing lack of respect for the people in power. Not long after, there was a human rights ceremony. I think it was on Human Rights Day, December 10. There was a ceremony in the cathedral. The Church had established a body called the Vicariate of Solidarity, which meant solidarity with those who were imprisoned and exiled and oppressed, and the Vicariate had organized the ceremony. There was a procession leaving the church, people left the church carrying candles. Harry went and left the church carrying a candle. Outrage! Fury! Incomprehension! that the American Ambassador would associate himself with these communists in the Catholic Church.

There were a series of things like that. Occasions when we visited people in prison, usually people who had some connection with the United States in one way or another. Neither the Ambassador nor I went, but we sent an Embassy officer to visit them, and this was noticed and reported. Of course the most notorious thing he did which brought him — grief is too strong a word, but it certainly brought him enormous controversy, was in July of

'86. There were some demonstrations in the streets of Santiago. Two Chilean teenagers, a boy and a girl, were intercepted by a Chilean army patrol. The patrol obviously suspected them of participating in the demonstrations. The girl may in fact have participated. But it's clear that the boy was simply there as a photographer. He was carrying a camera; he was an amateur photographer. At any rate, this patrol decided they had caught a couple of these communists who were causing all this disturbance, and they poured gasoline on them and set fire to them. The girl was badly burned; the boy was killed. Unfortunately for the Chilean army, the boy was a legal permanent resident of the United States and had been attending a high school in Maryland, I think, with the son of Charlie Hill who was George Shultz's personal assistant. This was the Rodrigo Rojas case. The army took them and dumped them into a ditch in some remote spot on the outskirts of town. The girl eventually managed to flag down a vehicle and got taken to a hospital. The Ambassador went to the boy's funeral. I almost went myself. The Ambassador was taking one of his rare breaks at the seaside when the funeral was scheduled. It was not clear if he was going to be able to get back to Santiago in time. It was not easy to communicate anywhere outside Santiago. The telecommunication system had not yet been privatized. I decided it was important for the United States to be represented, and I was getting ready to go, and then I got word that the Ambassador was on his way back to town and would go. As usual, Pinochet was determined to manipulate the occasion. A photographer got a picture of Harry in a room in which there was a big floral wreath from the Communist Party. The right wing's version of this was that the Ambassador clearly had declared his allegiance to the extreme left of Chile by going to this radical's funeral. Both of these young people had leftist connections. That's why they had been watching the street demonstration, which had been organized by the extreme and near-extreme left. The moderate parties had largely given up on street demonstrations by this point because they had not led to anything and had not produced anything.

The funeral led to Senator Helms' visit to Chile shortly thereafter. A visit which he made totally unannounced. We learned from the Chilean Government that he was there; even

the State Department didn't know. Harry sent a note over to his hotel and welcomed him to Chile and said he was at his service and asked if there was anything he could do. No response for several days. Finally on Saturday morning, he received a phone call from one of the Senator's aides saying the Senator would like him to come to the hotel and meet with him. So he went off to see him. Harry is one of the more unflappable people I know. This was one of the two or three occasions when I can remember his being visibly angry and visibly upset when he came back from that meeting. He was clearly treated in the most contemptuous manner. Helms and his aides had made up their minds that this was a left wing ambassador who had allied himself with left wing causes and was trying to undermine this noble government which was doing so much good for Chile. It must have been a very unpleasant interview.

Q: Did Helms make any statements to the press at the time, talking about the glories of Pinochet?

JONES: Yes, there was an interview just as he was leaving Chile if I remember correctly. But there was a still more interesting follow on to this whole saga. A few days later, Bob Gelbard, the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs, came down to Chile on a visit, and Harry took him over to call on the director of Chilean intelligence, who was an army general. And one of the very few political generals, the only one who would ever dare to discuss politics with us. He and the station chief had a good relationship, did a lot of sparring, but you could a least talk to this guy. So many of the Army generals you couldn't even get in to see, and when you got in to see them it was usually to discuss some military visit, some exchange program, and just that and nothing more. But General Gordon apparently had some sort of license from Pinochet to go a little further than that. So he was a regular contact. In the course of the conversation he said," What is this I hear from Senator Helms about your having a Chilean Army report, a report of the Chilean Army investigation that allegedly establishes that it was an army patrol that burned the two teenagers." I'm sure they kept stone faces; Harry's poker face was very good. But wild alarm bells began ringing because we did in fact have a copy of a Chilean Army report

which had been obtained through intelligence channels. It is one of the very few times when I've seen a station chief absolutely pale with panic when he got back to the embassy because one of his very good sources inside Chilean intelligence for all he knew was about to be blown sky high. He could be taken away and tortured, shot, anything. The Ambassador of course got on the secure phone to Washington immediately.

It turned out that the CIA had in fact briefed a staffer of Senator Helms about the existence of this report. Given his well known publicly stated interest about these events in Chile, the agency thought he should be aware of the existence of this report in which the Chileans themselves had concluded that this lieutenant who commanded this patrol had on his own decided to terminate these teenagers with extreme prejudice. The staffer had of course briefed Helms. Who exactly it was who called Chile probably will never be known, because I suspect other staffers were told. Although General Gordon was very specific when he said Helms, I suspect it was one of his staffers who called. Helms' office of course denied that anyone had said anything to the Chileans, and this was a gross calumny and atrocious lie intended to besmirch his reputation.

Q: Well, his staff was renowned for both meddling and being strongly supportive of right wing dictatorships. In fact there was a woman, Debbie DeMoss, who eventually married a Honduran right wing colonel, general whatever.

JONES: Who I think is running or has run for President of Honduras.

Q: Really I never quite figured out Helms. Whether this is just a way of being cute or being a populist and stirring up and muddying the waters or whether it is a real belief or not. I mean his having taken this cause on.

JONES: Well, I don't think there is any question in this particular instance of Chile. He believed that Pinochet had done a service to mankind in getting rid of Allende. Everything he heard about what he had done with the economic system was pro-free enterprise, he privatized things. Everything that he knew about Pinochet was absolutely A+. For the

minor defect of not holding elections, he was being pilloried by the US Government. In a minor sidelight to the whole incident, my son Michael, who was in Chile at the time, he had spent that semester at Catholic University where he had the new experience of classes opening by saying the Lord's Prayer every day. He had not run into that at Rice. He was just winding up the semester when all this occurred. He went to the Rojas funeral and provided an eyewitness account which gave me the pleasure of reporting my son's observations in a telegram to the Department of State. I described him as a knowledgeable American observer or something like that.

Q: I think this might be a good time to stop. I mean we have more to talk about or not?

JONES: Yes. We've covered the most controversial aspects of Chile. I could talk more about Pinochet.

Q: Why don't we stop so that we can have a full thing. I'll put on the end that we have talked about events leading up close to the plebiscite. Other things to talk about would be any human rights cases, Americans in trouble, the next time. Also the book Missing and the movie Missing. Were there still aftermaths to this. What was the feeling when you arrived and all about America's involvement in the overthrow of Allende. Of course it was years later but still it was an act of faith in the United States, in academic and liberal circles, that we were much involved. I was wondering what how this developed.

JONES: And there is another major chapter which is the Letelier case which took up a lot of my time.

Q: Yes, let's talk about the Letelier case. And so those are the things and so we'll pickup the plebiscite and a lot of that.

—Q: Today is the seventh of November 1996. George, Why don't we talk about some of the things that really grabbed the headlines in the United States about Chile. Some prior to your arrival but some of the reverberations were still around. My first thing is, what is the

common wisdom on American involvement in the overthrow of Allende? Were you in Chile at this time?

JONES: Of course the overthrow of Allende was way prior to my arrival, but as in any country where there was real or suspected American involvement in the overthrow of a government, no matter how long ago, you heard about it a lot. One of the things you heard about in Chile was an incident involving an American warship, the Baltimore, back in the 19th century. Apparently there was a real threat of our going to war with Chile over this incident. There were some sailors on shore leave who got into trouble.

Q: I think they took down the Chilean flag and pissed on it or something like that.

JONES: Something egregious like that. You still heard about it from Chileans a hundred years later.

Q: It was the Valparaiso incident or something like that.

JONES: There were a couple of good friends of mine, liberal democratic people who wrote a book while I was there called, The United States and Chile, An Ambivalent Relationship. They talked about that 19th century incident. Of course one of the things that every foreign service officer experiences is that the relationship with the United States is far more vivid in the other country than it is in the United States. No American, unless they studied diplomatic history, would have ever heard of this 19th century incident. Not many more will have ever heard of Allende.

[Tape obliterated by static at this point.]

JONES: Curiously we heard more about it from the right than from the left. The right would tell us that Allende had been overthrown partly at least thanks to the United States. Although there were a few very fervent nationalists who admitted no involvement by the United States. Usually it was thrown up to us as, :you helped us get rid of that devil

Allende. Now we have a good government and here you are trying to overthrow it again. There is no logic to your policy, no sense whatever to your policy." So I would go back to giving my lecture on democracy. What I emphasized was our consistent support for democracy, in 1973 and 1988. We didn't hear as much about it from the left in part because the people most closely associated with Allende were in exile. The left was also well aware that if it had any hope of getting rid of Pinochet it was going to be as a consequence of international pressure primarily by the United States and they needed the United States' help and support, so that was not the moment to go around complaining about what we had done 15 years previously. I think Nathaniel Davis' book My Two Years with Allende is the definitive factual record of what occurred in 1971-73. There certainly was substantial US involvement. Would it have happened had the US not gotten involved? You can ask the same question about Pinochet. Did Allende fall any sooner as a result of, not to put too fine a point on it, US subversion of the Allende regime? The disaster that was occurring in Chile was such that I don't see how Allende could have lasted much longer in any event. The military in particular were very much at pains to say that they took the decision on their own, and that it had nothing whatever to do with the United States. Admiral Merino, who just died the other day, was the Naval member of the government junta during the time I was there. He was not the original Navy member of the junta in 1973 but he later succeeded to the Naval place on the junta. On one occasion when I was in his home at a dinner, he told for what I'm sure was the 1000th time the story of his sitting in this very chair and hearing an Allende speech or an Allende decision of some sort that was simply the last straw. He pounded his pipe into the arm of the chair. Here's the hole, he said; it is still here. At that moment he decided that Allende had to be overthrown. It is a fact, that Merino was the instigator of the coup. He was then commanding the ships off the coast of Valparaiso, and Pinochet was a late and reluctant entrant into the group.

Q: Actually Pinochet was something of a second choice wasn't he? The first choice was killed in an automobile accident or something.

JONES: The commander of the army was assassinated. Pinochet had just recently been sworn in by Allende as commander in chief of the Army. But the other military leaders were pressuring him very hard to join the coup. It was only at the very last minute, I think it was the day before, that he told them he would go along. If they thought he was going to remain the tail of the dog, they were mistaken. The story that was told was they first realized how far they had let their power slip when Pinochet began to make exclusive use of the Presidential box at the Santiago Opera House, and if the other junta members wanted to use it they had to go to him.

I think the question of whether Pinochet would have left power if it had not been for the United States is a much more difficult question. I have gone back and forth on it in my own mind. I think that it would have been very difficult without US support. Certainly US support alone would not have done the job if you had not had many other elements present. Because the Carter Administration had opposed Pinochet. We had imposed sanctions on him of various kinds, all of which were totally ineffectual because the other circumstances were not there to permit them to be effective. As I said last time, the absolutely key element to Pinochet's departure was the insistence by his own closest supporters that there be a plebiscite. Not only their insistence that there be one, but as the time came closer, their insistence that it be a free and fair plebiscite. Now part of the reason that they insisted on it, I'm not sure any of them would admit this, but part of the reason was international pressure. I think if the United States had been following the policy of the first Reagan term and was being buddy-buddy with Pinochet and not complaining about the human rights situation at all, certainly the question arises whether the right wing would have been so sensitive to the question of whether there was going to be a free vote in October 1988. Moreover, had the eyes of the world not been on Chile and had there not been international observers in Chile for the plebiscite, then I think that Pinochet in any of numerous ways would have gotten away with it. He would have manipulated the situation or stolen it. The United States has very hard evidence that he was trying to do that right up to the very last moment. My conclusion is that although certainly a lot of Chilean effort

was essential in getting rid of Pinochet, another essential element was strong pressure by the United States. We said, OKAY it is your decision to hold this plebiscite. It wasn't our idea; it didn't come from us, but your constitution provides for this plebiscite, then let's see you hold it and respect the decision that comes out. I never held a conversation with a Chilean who suggested... about the only Chilean who suggested, not to us of course, that it might not be a free and fair plebiscite was Pinochet himself. The left feared that it might not be, but the right wing was absolutely determined to convince us that it was going to be free and fair. Mainly their worry was Pinochet is going to win this of course, and if he wins it, will the United States respect his victory? That was the question we got over and over again from the right.

Q: George, at the time, and the fires were kept burning through a book and a movie called Missing about an American student who was somewhat involved with the left wing and the Allende people and all and who was "missing". He really was.

JONES: Missing and dead.

Q: Could you say was any of that still hanging around when you were there and could you explain why it became a force in American-Chilean relations.

JONES: Well the movie was part of a whole series of movies by a leftist film-maker named Costa Gravas.

Q: "Z" had an impact on our relations with a couple of dictatorships.

JONES: I remember hearing at the time that "Z" came out that the foreign service entrance examination boards were using it as a question, to find out whether the candidates would recognize that "Z," whatever its merits artistically, was in fact political propaganda in the broadest sense of the term. That it was designed to advance a particular political cause. You can say the same thing about "Missing." It was designed to paint the worst possible picture of the Chilean coup leaders, and it was done by depriving people totally of the

context that at the time of the coup it was supported by a great majority of Chileans. In fact during the '88 plebiscite campaign the Pinochet forces dug up and used an old black and white film of an interview with Patricio Aylwin, who was the leader of the Christian Democratic Party and therefore the leader of the opposition forces and later, 1990-1994, became the President of Chile. Patricio Aylwin was being interviewed right after the coup by some European newspaper and he was trying to put it into context. Why did this happen? Well it happened because Allende led the country into political and economic disaster. You may recall that the housewives were putting chickens outside the homes of military officers to get across the message that they had to do something.

Having said all of that, the core story in “Missing” is there really was an American who was killed by security forces at the time of the overthrow. His father, Jack Lemmon in the movie, came down to Chile and actually found his body. The picture of the US Ambassador who was Nathaniel Davis was more than unflattering; it left a clear implication that Davis was a party to this, that he was aware of the boy's being killed and saw nothing wrong with it in effect. Davis sued the movie company. He had every reason to sue. The movie told lies. The US embassy was doing everything it could do to protect US citizens. It was a bloody overthrow. I think somebody's count was 1200 or so people killed, not only at the immediate time of the overthrow, but in the years immediately afterwards. By, I guess '76-'78, the killings had stopped. The fervor to just stamp out anybody who was allied with Allende had ceased. For one thing many of them had fled into exile or been expelled. A number were in prison of course. In that sense, Pinochet's human rights record improved after that point. There were no more documented case of people being executed on government orders; the Rojas murder was clearly the work of an overzealous lieutenant. This is not to say that Pinochet's human rights record was good by any means. Certainly there were imprisonments of people who had no reason to be imprisoned. Internal exile was a tactic they were particularly fond of. Chile is a country with many bleak places and they would send somebody off to a tiny island in the middle of a lake or to some extremely cold part of Chile or some extreme desert part of Chile and hold them with the most

minimal contact with the outside world, one phone call a month or something like that. Of course demonstrations were broken up; people were beaten over the head with clubs, all that kind of thing, but at least the urge to exterminate had calmed down after the first wave of fervor.

But of course one of the things that had taken place in that period of “revolutionary fervor” was what was then the only act of foreign political terrorism ever to be committed on American soil. I guess it is still the only such act to be committed in the nation's capital. That was the assassination of Orlando Letelier, who had been Allende's Foreign Minister and was in exile in the United States and was working for a Washington think tank called The Institute for Policy Studies. He and an associate, Ronnie Moffat, and her husband, were in a car driving to work when a car bomb that had been placed under Letelier's seat, went off as they were going around Sheridan Circle.

Q: There is a tablet there now.

JONES: Is there? You know I had never seen that. I must go and look. I talked about not having instructions or not having adequate instructions, but certainly one of the things about our mission in Chile that was crystal clear was to pursue the Letelier case by any means available to us, by any opening we might find.

Q: He was killed and the lady was killed too.

JONES: Yes! The husband survived with just light injuries. And of course they were American citizens. So we had several reasons to be interested in the Letelier case. There is a long history to it that I won't go into. There is a fascinating book written by a former US District Attorney which covers all the early stages of the case. People had already been tried; some of them convicted in the case by the time I came to Chile. But in 1986 a Chilean whose name I had better not use even at this late date, came to see me, someone whom I had contact with on several different occasions. He was an interesting source of political views and analysis. One day out of the blue he came to see me and said that

he had a friend who was in the Chilean Army and had been among the group—I'm sure he did not tell me all of this at the beginning; it came out bit by bit—he had been among the group that had traveled to the United States to assassinate Letelier. This was an army Major named Armando Fernandez Larios. He said that Fernandez was fed up with his situation. Again this was not in the first conversation, but there were many meetings as all of this developed. He had been taken off normal Army duties, he wasn't doing anything, drawing a salary, but he had been relieved of duties. Number one, he was bored, and number two he didn't like what this might mean. Was he going to be forced out of the Army? I'm sure that something worse went through his mind. He wanted to talk to someone in the Embassy about his situation. That's not quite right, because he was very much afraid of talking directly to anyone in the Embassy and for that matter so were we. At this point we had no way of knowing if this were a set-up or what it was. He wanted to exchange some information through our mutual friend and see whether, under what circumstances, how might he be treated if he went to the United States. It turned out he had a sister who lived in New York. In fact it turned out to our great surprise, much later on in this, that he had in fact been born in Washington. The son of a Chilean officer who was an Attach# in the Chilean Embassy. As the son of a foreign diplomat he had no claim to US citizenship, although it intrigued us at the time. As it turned out, his sister had been urging him to get out and get away from all this. So long exchanges with Washington ensued. Of course the case was in the hands of the FBI. The US attorney's office was very interested and the State Department as well. But there was also a lot of caution. There were all kinds of problems. As usual we had to contend with the skeptics who contended that there was no way this could be done. How on earth is this guy going to be gotten out of Chile? Being an Army officer, is he going to walk up to the airport and fly to the United States? That is not at all likely. We are going to have to tell him that he is going to be subject to prosecution in the United States for his role in the assassination. If you tell him this is he still going to come? No way.

As I recall, months went by before we could get Washington to decide anything. Sounds familiar to any of us who have ever been in the Foreign Service. But finally as a result of persistent banging on Washington and a continuing development of our indirect relationship with Fernandez Larios, we began to get some movement. My most dramatic involvement was a time in November 1986, when finally after much hand wringing and soul searching it was decided on both sides, Fernandez Larios' and the US Government's side, that it would be useful for there to be a face to face contact. The Ambassador had put me in charge of the case. In fact he didn't want anybody else in the Embassy, except the station chief, to know anything about this. So I was deprived of the usual staff that might have helped on this. I did all the telegrams myself, because we were so concerned about all these aspects, including the aspect that if somehow word got out, that Fernandez Larios would disappear into a military cell and never be seen again until you heard the noise of the firing squad. So it was decided that I was the only person that could go and see him.

I talked to one of the Embassy secretaries and said I'd like to use your apartment for a meeting. I'd like to arrange for you to be somewhere else. We wanted to hold it on safe territory and have some reasonable assurance that it was not going to be bugged. It was not reasonable to believe that Pinochet's police would have bugged the secretary's apartment. So I went home, and in Chile as in Costa Rica I had a bodyguard who was with me at all times. So I told the driver and I told the bodyguard, “That's all for today. Nothing else on the schedule for today.” They thought it was very peculiar that I was home at that hour of the afternoon and peculiar that I wasn't going anywhere else. “Are you sure you don't want us to stick around?” “No!”

As soon as they were out of sight, I grabbed a bottle of scotch which I always found to be helpful in breaking the ice in a Latin environment and put it into a paper sack and went out and caught a taxi, the only time I ever caught a taxi in Chile in front of my own house, and went to the apartment—the nearest thing to playing cloak and dagger that

I ever got involved in. I met with Fernandez Larios and although he was very wary, the ice did get broken. We got a number of things straightened out face to face that hadn't been earlier. There were certain countries he could travel to without a passport, so we went through a stage where we were trying to set up a meeting in Argentina. His contact in Argentina was going to be CIA. I don't recall now why, I guess because the FBI at this point was still extremely skittish about having anything to do with this. I don't know whether CIA work is really like John LeCarre or whether they modeled it on John LeCarre for my benefit. At any rate, I was told to tell Fernandez about the rolled up magazine as a sign of identification and the contact phrase to be used and everything else.But Fernandez Larios decided against Argentina. Another of the complications was that his sister had hired him a lawyer, and this American lawyer came down from New York and was far more nervous than anyone else involved. He had visions of being hauled off by the secret police and never heard of again. I guess he had seen “Missing.” He was always giving very nervous advice to Fernandez Larios. The FBI finally sent some people down to Santiago. Once that happened they began to get committed, to say OKAY this is real; it may actually happen. It was finally worked out that Fernandez would be willing to get on board a plane. The CIA station had checked and found out that his name wasn't in the Chilean lookout book. They had someone who had access to the airport computers and established that as near as they could tell, if he tried to leave, his name wasn't going to come up on any kind of screen. So he decided he was prepared to risk it. He got on a plane for Rio de Janeiro. The FBI agreed to meet him.

The most dramatic single meeting that I ever had in the Foreign Service was when I called a meeting of the Emergency Action Committee, which was the group that mainly worried about threats to the Embassy, but included all the senior people, the station chief, the attach#, the political officer, the security officer and so on. I got them all sitting down and told them that a Chilean Army Major on active duty was now in the air on his way to Rio de Janeiro where he would be met by FBI agents and taken to the United States and placed under arrest and tried for complicity in the Letelier case. I think I had the most stunned

audience that I ever had in my career as well. It all worked beautifully, no problems at all. Then the Ambassador and I went to see the Interior Minister, who was not a bad guy, at his home. Within the Pinochet cabinet certainly one of the least far right wing, and we broke the news to him. We had another stunned audience. I certainly hated to do it to him and complicate his life.

Fernandez Larios appeared in US federal court and testified against the Pinochet government. I'm not sure whether he was given any prison time or if he served a suspended sentence. It seems to me it was the latter. And then he went into the witness protection program which was part of the deal. He is presumably still living somewhere in the United States. It was an extraordinary event, and in addition to helping resolve the Letelier case, it helped the return of democracy to Chile. It was enormously embarrassing to the Pinochet government that this had occurred.

Q: I assume they had been denying the whole thing.

JONES: Oh yes! And continued to deny it. But they could not deny that Fernandez had gotten away, that it had been possible for that to occur. As in any dictatorship, part of its success is its image of invincibility. When you demonstrate they can be outmaneuvered in their own territory, it damages their own opinion of themselves along with everybody else's. It also enabled us to reactivate the whole case. The Chilean courts had denied extradition of the two senior Chilean Army officers who we knew were responsible for the assassination, General Contreras, who was head of the Chilean intelligence agency at the time of the assassination, retired at the time I was there, and another general whose name escapes me at the moment. The request for extradition had been turned down because the Chilean courts had said there was insufficient evidence to support it. Now we had new evidence and we could go back in. During my time, we didn't actually accomplish anything further. We sent dozens of diplomatic notes and all kinds of other actions, but we laid the groundwork for the legal action which took place after Pinochet's departure, which eventually led. not to Contreras' extradition, but we had always said in the diplomatic

approaches, that either extradition or trial in Chile was acceptable to us, either one or the other. A trial in Chile eventually occurred; Contreras was sentenced. Pinochet, who is still today commander-in-chief of the Chilean Army, made one last effort to keep him out of prison, but in the end yielded and let him go. So in the end it was a successful law enforcement/diplomatic effort.

Q: As a result of their involvement in this, I would have thought that the senior Embassy officers would have suffered somewhat.

JONES: No we didn't. We suffered a lot more from the Rojas case that we talked about the last time than we did from the Letelier case. The level of Chilean embarrassment over Letelier was extremely high. I mean for all Chileans. Anybody who wasn't totally blinded by hero worship of Pinochet knew perfectly well what had happened. Contreras had planned and ordered Letelier's murder, the only uncertainty in everybody's mind was to what extent Pinochet was personally involved, whether Contreras did it without his knowledge or under some vague general authority from Pinochet. To many of us it was inconceivable that Contreras would have taken this serious an action without checking with Pinochet first. Pinochet controlled and managed everything in his government. But we had no evidence of that; Contreras never said anything of course. As I recall some of Fernandez Larios' testimony was suggestive on that point, but no hard fact. So we never accused Pinochet and Chileans never talked about his possible involvement. But I don't think I ever talked to anybody who tried to argue that Contreras hadn't done this. The argument instead was, if the chief of your CIA was accused of something like this, would you extradite him to another country? How could you expect us to do that? Knowing all the secrets that he knows, would you hand him over to another foreign power? To which we had the very fortunate reply, “Fine, then try him in Chile.” We always said that would be perfectly acceptable.

The Fernandez Larios business was in late '86, early '87. The plebiscite was October 1988. There were a number of amazing aspects to it. As part of the deal, as part

of Pinochet's decision to permit... I just realized, I haven't said anything about the assassination attempt on Pinochet. Still another chapter. An assassination attempt in September of 1987. It was one of the most beautiful examples of extra sensory perception by a senior State Department official that I have ever seen. Robert Gelbard, who is not universally loved in the Foreign Service, was senior Deputy Assistant Secretary for Inter-American Affairs. I was due for home leave, and my home leave kept getting delayed for a variety of reasons, but I finally got away. The Ambassador wanted very much to go off on some leave of his own. By the time I could get off it worked out that toward the end of my leave, we were both going to be away. If he was going to take his leave when he wanted it, and I took my full home leave we were going to have to have the third ranking person in the Embassy in charge. The Ambassador, who was a great believer in delegation downwards, said, " Fine, why not? The world won't come to an end." So I went off on my home leave, and in due course he went off on his leave. I was out in Colorado visiting one of our children, and I got a phone call from Gelbard's office saying that it was absolutely unacceptable for both Harry and me to be absent from Chile. Since the Ambassador had left, he wanted me to get myself back down there right away. So I had the world's shortest home leave. I got on the plane and got back to Chile.

I had barely gotten back, like two or three days after, when the Communists made a nearly successful attempt to assassinate Pinochet. It turned out that they had gotten a substantial arsenal of weaponry from the Cubans, which just like that boatload of arms in Venezuela in the 1960's, had been clandestinely delivered to an isolated point on Chile's long seacoast and stored in a cave. The Chilean Communists had taken the most useful items, notably RPG's, rocket propelled grenades, and planned an assassination attempt. Pinochet had a little farm out in a mountain valley about an hour away from Santiago, which was actually owned by the Chilean army. It had been acquired for his benefit, but was not technically in his name. It was known that he went out there on weekends, and there was only one road to and from the place, so it was easy for the Communists to know that he was going to be returning along this particular road sometime in the late afternoon.

So they set up an ambush, and it was very nearly successful. There were at least a couple of people killed. But one of his prudent security measures was that there were several identical cars, identical Mercedes, that were used, and they did not know which one he was in. Also these rockets had to travel a certain distance before they were armed, and they were not skilled in the use of these. The Cubans had not sent down any trainers with the weapons, and they fired several of them too close to the cars with the result they made dents but didn't penetrate. The cars were bulletproofed. Pinochet got a small cut on the hand and that was it. The famous story was that after it was all over, he looked at the pattern in the bulletproof glass of his car that had been made by one of the rockets, and concluded that it looked like the Virgin, which was yet another proof for him of divine protection of his rule.

Shortly afterwards the part of the arsenal that was still in storage was discovered. A fisherman or something ran across it along the coast. We provided some technical assistance to the Chileans in tracking the weapons and identifying where they had come from. It provided a useful opportunity for us to make the point that we were just as much opposed to extremism of the left as extremism of the right. We did not support violent solutions in Chile. I went as charg# to visit one of Pinochet's guards in the hospital, and held a press conference on the hospital steps to make those points. It was the second lead in El Mercurio the next day.

That was sort of the last gasp of the extreme left. I think there were some things that happened much later on after Pinochet left. There was no significant effort against Pinochet after that. It must have been extremely demoralizing to them to have come so close and not succeeded. Of course he tried to avoid offering them such another easy opportunity.

So along came the plebiscite in 1988. Pinochet made the decision, I'm sure with much reluctance but under heavy pressure from his own people, that at least to some extent, this had to be played honestly and fairly. So an opposition newspaper was licensed for the

first time in 15 years. Advertising time was permitted on television, very rigorously limited, but there was to be half an hour once a week, late in the evening, 9:30-10:00, of which 15 minutes would be available to those who supported a vote of yes in the plebiscite for Pinochet to stay on and 15 minutes for those who favored a vote of no. I think the view in the United States is that under no circumstances does a dictator ever play fair. Pinochet is an interesting example that under certain circumstances where there are reasons and incentives, they do play fair. This had an enormous impact in Chile, that for the first time in 15 years political discussion was being permitted publicly. The forces of the “no,” who by this time had gained some self confidence and a sense of organization, the forces of opposition to Pinochet, they went to some very good advertising people who worked for Chilean advertising firms and designed a series of brilliant 15-minute political programs. On the whole very reassuring, very moderate. Nothing to give ammunition to those who claimed that the opposition were a bunch of fire-breathing radicals who would destroy Chile if they are ever permitted back in.

Political demonstrations were permitted. Only a very few of them, rigorously controlled. Nevertheless you had the first legal political demonstrations in Chile in 15 years. The rallies, the marches for the opposition were massive. So we were pretty hopeful how things were going to go in the plebiscite, but not at all sure what Pinochet was going to do. As I mentioned earlier we had all kinds of reports of things he was thinking about doing.

Q: What were you getting from the leaders of the community? What did they think was going to happen? The Chileans.

JONES: Well the people on the right were still insisting that Pinochet was going to win, although more and more nervously as time went by. Some obvious things like the television campaign and the opposition rallies gave them cause for concern. The people in the opposition, many of them were sticking to their standard 15-year line that Pinochet is not going to permit this to happen; he'll figure out something to do. But they were willing to put this aside and say we are willing to give this a try, which is what we had been urging

them to do. By early in '88 the debate in the opposition was settled and they had agreed to go full tilt to contest the plebiscite. They weren't going to boycott it. They weren't going to say it was all a farce. They were going to go at this seriously and give it everything they had.

On the night of the plebiscite, the scheme was that the Minister of the Interior, who now was a much harder line person than the one we talked about in the Letelier case, the Minister of the Interior was going to come on TV and personally read the returns. He came on early in the evening and read some very partial returns, some tiny percent of the vote showing Pinochet ahead, showing the “yes” ahead, and then silence. In fact the TV stations that were under government control switched to American sitcoms. Everybody sat there chewing their fingernails wondering what was going to happen next. What happened was first of all another ex-Interior Minister of Pinochet's, a very prominent figure of the right was interviewed on the Catholic University station which was not under government control, kind of a talk show together with the leader of the opposition. That very friendly and amicable discussion helped to set the tone that the world was not going to come to an end if the “No” won. Then in the wee hours of the morning it became known that the junta was going to meet at the Presidential Palace. Of course we had information coming in from quick counts that were being done. I think there were at least a couple. One was being done by the opposition and there was another one that was being done by the National Democratic Institute which was there in force. So we knew that the “No” was winning, but it had not been announced publicly. The TV stations got their cameramen to the entrance to the palace and filmed the members of the junta going in, and they stopped the commander of the Air Force, General Matthei, and asked, General, how are things going? He said, “Well, it seems to me the “No” is winning.” General Matthei and the commander of the Carabineros, the Chilean police, General Stange, were the two members of the junta who had assured us privately that the results of the plebiscite were going to be respected. We were sure that they were among those at the time who were urging Pinochet that this had to be an honest plebiscite, and that he had to abide by the

results of it. That was the crucial event, because once Matthei said that on camera, of course he did that very deliberately, and he did it going into the meeting with Pinochet knowing that whatever happened inside, Pinochet's hands were going to be tied by what Matthei had said outside. They got in and Pinochet gave them a copy of a draft decree, suspending the plebiscite in essence and going back to the drawing board, and they all refused to sign it. So he threw up his arms and said in effect that it was all over. After that a very glum Interior Minister went back on TV, not having been seen for five or six hours, and started reporting the results. The next morning there were something like a million people on the streets and parks of downtown Santiago. Very peaceful, very orderly, but a tremendously joyful celebration.

Chile is the country of my most bizarre experiences. The last thing I'm going to tell you about Chile is even more bizarre than all these bizarre stories I've told you so far. That was the story of the poisoned grape. Timing in life is everything. You are always hearing about people, Clark Clifford is a great example. If he had only died in time, how well off he would have been. You stick around too long, you get into trouble.

Q: Clark Clifford is a former presidential advisor, Secretary of Defense who as an elderly lawyer, highly respected, who got into deep trouble by being seen to be a tool of some Arab bankers of very dubious reputation.

JONES: Had I left Chile as Harry Barnes did in November of '88 right after the plebiscite, we would have all been covered in glory both externally and internally in Chile and the US. It would have been great. Tony Gillespie came in as Ambassador. The agreement was that I would stick around for about six months after he got there before leaving myself, to help him get his feet on the ground and get started. I guess it was right around the turn of the year, we got an anonymous phone call. Somebody called up the Embassy out of the blue and said that he had injected cyanide into grapes that were being shipped to the United States. I'm trying to remember what he used as a justification for this. It was nothing political. I mean he didn't say this was because of the plebiscite or the Rodrigo

Rojas case or anything like that. I think it was to the effect that he didn't have a job, and the economy was going to hell, and nobody would listen to him. So he just wanted to warn us that he had taken this dramatic act of protest. Well, what the heck do you do? Of course you report this. Bearing in mind all of the injunctions from Washington about not over classifying, we sent it in unclassified. Absolutely nothing to protect about this phone call. But that of course meant that it went to the Department of Agriculture, US Customs and all these agencies in Washington who had no ability to discriminate between one kind of information and another, and they halted the importation of Chilean grapes over the weekend. When we found out about it the State Department was horrified; we were horrified. We were told sternly never to send anything like this in unclassified ever again. You can't let Agriculture get their hands on a State Department cable for gosh sakes. With a lot of frantic work by the Embassy and by the State Department we persuaded them to release the grapes and start importing them normally again. And in fact it was even by a miracle kept out of the papers because we had gotten it turned around again fairly quickly. The grape exporters of course knew what had happened. Once again I was charg#. All of these things seemed to happen when I was charg#, and I had the honor of calling them in and apologizing and explaining what had happened and so on, the heads of the major exporting associations. And so we breathed a huge sigh of relief; things were back to normal.

Then this guy called again, and assured us that you haven't found it but I did poison those grapes. I just want to assure you of that. So we reported that, classified this time. As a result of the second report, the fruit inspectors for the Department of Agriculture began a very intensive search. They didn't stop the importation this time, but they began a very intensive sampling of imported grapes.

Q: You might mention that Chilean grapes are a mainstay in every supermarket in the United States.

JONES: During the winter because we have opposite seasons. Chilean grapes are grown when the snow is on the ground in the US, and vice-versa. Our two markets fit together relatively well. Lo and behold, on a Sunday I think, an inspector found a couple of strange looking grapes, literally two out of hundreds of thousands if not millions of grapes, and what looked to him like a couple of puncture marks. They were rushed off to the laboratory. On a Monday morning we got the call that the lab tests from the Food and Drug Administration had shown traces of cyanide. Boom! The Food and Drug Commissioner ordered not only the cessation of imports of Chilean grapes, but ordered all Chilean grapes taken off the shelves of American supermarkets and destroyed. Bearing in mind the Tylenol case and other instances where people had discovered poisonous substances in products on the shelves, there being no way to tell how many additional bottles of Tylenol had been poisoned, so the solution was to get them all off the shelves. And of course, at this point it did go public. The Food and Drug Administration made a public announcement. Here we thought we had just established the best possible US- Chilean relations and laid the groundwork for Pinochet's departure and everything else, and this thing hits us in the face. Demonstrations in the front of the Embassy. And then to return to your question about the effect this had on senior people at the Embassy. In contrast to the Letelier case, where there was no accusation of personal involvement or personal bias at all, in the grape case there was a prominent Chilean, not in the first rank but in the second rank of prominence, named Ricardo Claro. He was an attorney; he was president of Santa Rita Vineyards; he was president of the Chilean-American cultural center. He was a regular lunch companion of mine. He gave everybody to believe for years that he was basically anti-Pinochet, although he confessed to me at the time of the plebiscite that he had voted for Pinochet. The other thing is that he was a stockholder in a shipping company that shipped grapes to the United States. He decided, this otherwise apparently rational man, an attorney for a number of prominent American companies, he decided that the United States Government was responsible for this. Among many other things, he had a morning radio show, a five or ten minute broadcast in which he commented on various things that were going on in Chile. He began to use his radio broadcast to attack

both Tony Gillespie and much more intensely, me, for having personally plotted this as a means of getting Pinochet out sooner. Because under the Constitution, Pinochet was to stay until March of 1990. There would be Presidential elections in the fall of 1989, so he was going to be around for a while. This was both punishment for Pinochet and a means of getting him out sooner. Of course, he never spoke about the fact there was personal punishment for Claro's pocketbook. Some of his ships' cargoes became worthless; there was substantial economic impact on him personally and on a number of other prominent Chileans. He held a press conference announcing his resignation as president of the cultural center and saying he wanted nothing further to do with the United States. Just the bitterest kind of attack. I spent the last two or three months in Chile defending myself to the right wing. The left wing generally kept their mouths shut with puzzlement and bafflement. The right wing unleashed all of the bitterness they had piled up over the plebiscite and many other things and said this was the last straw that the United States would do this. “Of course it was political. You mean to tell me the State Department doesn't tell the Food and Drug Administration what to do! You're lying through your teeth. This is all a calculated administration decision to punish Chile.” I mean it was unbelievably bad. Just about as hostile an atmosphere as we could possibly have. A terrible start for Tony in his mission. I could get out of there in a couple of months but he had to stay.

Q: I'm interviewing Tony now and we're in the middle of Colombia where they tried to shoot him all the time, so when I get to Chile, I'll bring up grapes.

JONES: When it comes time for Chile, just have a little dish of grapes on the table.

Q: Well George, This would probably be a good time to stop. We are at the end of Chile, just to put on the record where should we pick it up? You left Chile in what, 1989?

JONES: I left in May of '89. I should tell the story of my search for an onward assignment.

Q: All right we'll pick it up at that point then.

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Today is the 26th of November, 1996. George, so you are leaving Chile and you are looking for another assignment.

JONES: Well, actually it started before I left Chile. Personnel suggested that I come up to Washington in late March or early April of that year and talk about potential onward assignments. That of course was at the beginning of the Bush administration and a change in personnel once again in the ARA. Bernie Aronson was coming in as Assistant Secretary. He was one of the people that I went to see, one of the people I was most interested in seeing. He had not been sworn in yet, but he had a small office in ARA and was assembling his staff. I would have been very interested in a Deputy Assistant Secretary position or an Ambassadorship at that stage. But in talking to Bernie and to others, I gathered that the pickings were slim in those categories. I had hear that the job of National Security Advisor for Latin America was going to be coming open. Bob Pasterino, who was in it, would be leaving shortly. Toward the end of my conversation with Bernie, I asked him, when it became clear that I was striking out in other directions, I said, “Well, I understand that the NSC job is going to be opening up.” He said, “Now that is a very good idea. You would be very good for that. Let me look into that and we'll get back to you.” We stood up to go and I said, “There is one thing you should be aware of as you explore this possibility, that I am very likely on Senator Helms' list.” He grimaced and said, “Oh, what for?” I said,” Just for being in Chile. Just for being Harry Barnes' deputy. He is bitterly antagonistic toward Ambassador Barnes, and it is very likely that it has rubbed off on me.” He said nothing further. I wasn't sure anything was going to happen. I had made it clear that I was wearing my scarlet “A”. The next thing that happened was that I was told I had an interview at the White House with the Deputy National Security Advisor and went over and talked with him.

Q: Who was he?

JONES: Gates. Bob Gates. And a fairly brief interview, he looked at my r#sum# and said, “This looks very impressive.” But he sort of left it open, and I still wasn't sure where this was heading. Very shortly afterwards, I got a call saying would I come to see Brent Scowcroft, the President's National Security Advisor? So I put on my best suit and trundled back to the White House a second time and had a brief meeting with Scowcroft in which he offered me the job. He stuck out his hand and we shook on it, and he asked me how soon I could start. I said, “Well I do have a family I left behind in Chile and all our household effects and I would like to be able to get down there and put some things in order, as usual I will have to leave my wife to do all the packing, but I can at least get started on it.” So we agreed on my starting in a couple of weeks. He said I should go see the administrative people, so I went to see them and start processing in. I was flying back to Chile that evening, so I went over to the State Department. I had lunch with the Deputy Latin American Advisor, and we talked about how the office might be run. There was an issue as to where it might be located, what office space we might have, and we talked about things like that, and I received various and sundry congratulations from people around ARA and then I got on the plane and flew back to Chile.

On Tuesday of the following week, three or four days later, I got a phone call from Bob Kozak, who was Deputy Assistant Secretary at that point. The unpleasant task had trickled down the line from Scowcroft to I don't know how many other people in between and the buck finally stopped with Mike. He told me that sometime over the weekend, the senior senator from North Carolina had called Scowcroft and said that I was personally unacceptable to him. So despite the handshake, the offer was being withdrawn.

Q: In the first place, this is no fancy appointment. I mean it is a good working man's position in the Foreign Service. It is not an Ambassadorship; it is not a Deputy Secretary. I mean it is a good solid one, but it is not going to come up on Helms' radar unless somebody is really working at it. Do you have any idea who was blowing the whistle? I mean it sounds like there is a mole in ARA or something like that.

JONES: Well, Helms had this staff of people who shared his distaste for the Foreign Service in general. How much he was personally aware and how much he was acting on memos put before him by his staff I don't know. Part of the background to this I learned later. I heard one vivid version of it from a retired colleague just a couple of months ago. The conservatives in the Republican Party who were interested in Latin America were very upset by Aronson's appointment, because Aronson had been a lifelong Democrat and probably still regards himself as one. He had been a speech writer for Walter Mondale, had worked with labor unions and other “unsavory” organizations. Having lost that battle, they were very interested in having someone conservative in the Latin American job at the NSC . Of course during the first part of the Reagan administration, they had Constantine Menges, whom I think I mentioned in an earlier tape, who was entirely a soul mate.
So from their standpoint, it had only gone downhill, and would go still further downhill. That would have been their view even if I hadn't been in Chile. I was a foreign service officer of no known conservative leanings and that was bad enough. But of course, Chile was clearly part of it. I think at least his staff was out to prevent the upward movement of anyone who had been associated with what they regarded as a mistaken, indeed a criminal, policy in Chile. So, there I was. We left Chile in May which was a little earlier than I had originally been scheduled to leave, but later than I would have left had I gone into the NSC job. At that point we didn't have much enthusiasm for sticking around. Plus, now that all bets were off in terms of an onward assignment, it was important that I get back to Washington as quickly as possible to start walking the corridors, as the expression goes. And that is exactly what I did. So I was essentially in limbo, an experience common to a lot of senior officers, for the next several months. There were a couple of Deputy Assistant Secretary positions open that I interviewed for, but the Assistant Secretaries already had somebody in mind. I was being interviewed because Personnel was telling them I was a deserving case that ought to be considered. A good friend of mine was Director of Mexican Affairs and he asked me if I would undertake to organize the annual meeting of the Binational Commission which is a committee of members of the US and Mexican

cabinets. They were meeting in Mexico City in September, so I did the organizational work on that. It kept me busy. But nothing else was turning up.

Finally one day I ran into another friend of mine who was president of the American Foreign Service Association, AFSA. He had just come into office and his vice president who had been elected with him had decided to retire and was therefore leaving the position and would I be interested? The more I thought about it the more I thought this would be fun to do for awhile. The Department seconds two people to AFSA, the president and the vice president, so it would mean no loss in salary and benefits, and it would be an opportunity to do some work on behalf of the Foreign Service as a whole. So I told him yes. I spent a few days working myself into that job and finally had my future settled. Maria and I decided to go off on vacation for a couple of weeks. But while I was on vacation, Mike Kozak called again and said, “How would you like to go as Ambassador to Guyana?” I thought about it overnight and talked to my wife and said, “Sure!” It was not the ambassadorship in a Spanish-speaking country that I had hoped would come my way, but it was an Ambassadorship and it was a bird in the hand.I continued to work at AFSA over the next year as I went through the process of filling out all the forms and getting them approved by everybody, all the clearances done, State Department security, FBI, IRS, White House Counsel, etc. Finally in June of 1990, the nomination was sent to the Senate. I was told that the Bush Administration very sensibly had dropped that peculiar Reagan Administration practice of having a political and a Foreign Service candidate for the same job. I had the assurance of knowing that I was the one and only candidate, and that I had been previously approved. My name had gone from State to the White House and had been approved before the job was even offered to me. In addition, as a double guarantee to keep things from going wrong on Ambassadorial appointments, the Bush administration had instituted the custom of pre-clearance on the Hill. Before the nomination went forward, they had checked it out with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. I was told that no objections had been raised. I was greatly relieved to hear that. This fit in with what Kozak had told me the theory was in ARA, namely that Helms was not going to care about

Guyana. They had concluded they might have problems if they tried to send me to any larger, more significant country but for Guyana there would be no problem. Well, they were wrong.

It was never explained what went wrong with the pre-clearance, whether it went to the wrong Helms aide or whether somebody just slipped up or my name didn't ring a bell or what. As the summer wore on it became clear that Helms continued to have strenuous objections to my appointment. A hearing was finally held in October. I was going through with Jack Leonard who had just been DCM in Nicaragua and was going as Ambassador to Suriname, and with Phil Hughes, a political appointee going to Barbados. We went up together for the great victory; a hearing was finally scheduled. Helms' first tactic was always to block hearings, because there is a rule that you can't hold a hearing while the Senate is in session if any Senator objects. So they scheduled the hearing for 1:30 P.M. The Senate wasn't going to meet until 2:00. The Democrats were still in control at that point. Chris Dodd was Chairman of the Latin American Subcommittee and doing his best to push these appointments through. So when he turned the microphone over to Helms, Helms proceeded to ask Leonard a long series of questions about Nicaragua which consumed the half hour. At the end of the half hour, Dodd said regrettably the Senate is now in session and an objection has been raised to continuing the hearing. Helms said with a smile, “I really regret that because I have a lot of questions that I would like to ask of Mr. Jones, but we have to go now.” That was the end of the hearing or rather the partial hearing. They never got to Phil Hughes at all much less to me.All kinds of people then got involved. The White House went to Senator Dole and tried to get him to blast things loose. Of course Hughes who had been an aide to Bush when he was Vice President was pulling all the strings he had all over town to try to get the nominations brought to the floor. Finally it was made clear that Helms would permit all the nominations to go to the floor except mine. So the decision was made to sacrifice the difficult case and let the others go through. It was a reasonable decision; I would have made the same decision myself. So there we were. The Congress had adjourned. There had in fact been an interruption of

Congress during the year and some nominations had to be submitted again that had not been approved. So I was submitted a second time in 1990. But here we came to 1991 with the new Congress. If my nomination was going to go forward, it had to be submitted a third time. And of course there was a strong feeling in a number of quarters that this was utterly pointless.

Helms never admitted to anyone that he had any bias against anybody. His real or ostensible reason, your guess is as good as mine, was that he had written to the State Department and asked for copies of all the documents relating to Chile in a certain time period, the end of Pinochet's administration. This was a leftover from the Rodrigo Rojas burning case, and the accusation that Helms leaked information to the Chilean intelligence service. As part of his attempt to clear his name, he had asked for all the documents relating to Chile. The State Department in what I thought was one of its most mistaken moments had written him back that enclosed are all the documents with the exception of two which due to sensitive national security considerations we cannot provide. Of course, that focused his attention on the missing two documents. Why is the State Department withholding these two documents? Why are they denying them? So this was his stated reason for delaying on my nomination. He intended to continue to block my nomination until he was given these documents. The widespread view in the State Department was that this was strictly cover, that he had no intention of letting my nomination go through in any event. It was pointless to let him jerk us through hoops, and dangerous to show him documents. One of them was a memorandum from Assistant Secretary Abrams to the Secretary; the other was an official-informal letter from Ambassador Barnes to the Department, the most private kind of internal correspondence. To reveal this kind of correspondence in a case where the guy wasn't going to get confirmed anyway was idiotic, the argument ran.

I mean this whole year I felt like I was on a seesaw or a puppet at the end of a string. I had quit the AFSA job in September of '91 because the hearing had been scheduled and it briefly looked like the nomination might go through. So once again ARA had given me a

tiny little office on a tiny little obscure corridor. I had a place to sit, but nothing particularly to do. One day I would get word that things were going to get unblocked and were all going to get resolved. The next day there would be word that it was bleaker than ever. And so I was jerked back and forth through all this period. As a result of the Department's internal debate, the nomination was not sent back to the Senate until October. Finally in October as a result of, I don't know what it was a result of, I had pounded and pinged on the system in every way I knew how to, President Bush sent the nomination to the Senate for a third time.

Larry Eagleburger, to his everlasting credit in my eyes, the Deputy Secretary of State, decided he would go personally to see Helms and show him the two documents. Not give them to him, but let him read the documents. From an entirely objective standpoint, I was as outraged as anybody in the building that Helms would have access to this correspondence, but from a personal standpoint, I was delighted that Eagleburger was doing something that might result in breaking my nomination loose. At any rate it was clear that if it failed, then I was finished; there would at least be some conclusion to it. By this point I was anxious to have, to reach closure as they say, in one form or another and not have this go on and on. So he went to see Helms. Helms read the documents, said, “Thank you very much; that's what I wanted.” Eagleburger said,” I would like you to meet with Mr. Jones.” Which was one of the things we had been trying to do for a year and a half, to get me in to see either Helms or a member of his staff. They were impossible; you could not get in to see anybody. They wouldn't return my phone calls, nothing. And Helms said, “Fine. I'd like him to meet with my chief of staff first, and then I would be happy to meet with him.” No reference to Chile. No reference to past complaints about me of any sort. So I met with Jim Lucier, who we learned at that time was just about to be fired as Helms' chief of staff. Admiral Nance was coming in as his replacement. I've always wondered if this had some possible connection, if it was Lucier who bore the great grudge. In fact, Helms' practice has changed from that moment forward. Nance clearly

has counseled Helms not to engage in this kind of Mickey Mouse tactic of holding up ambassadors.

Q: Well, Nance comes from the military too. You do these things and you realize these are not petty games you play I would think. I don't know.

JONES: The meeting with Lucier was interesting. Lucier was obviously in an extremely bad mood at having to talk to me at all. He asked what I thought of the situation in Central America. I said I hadn't been involved with Central American affairs for six years but I thought the movement toward peace in El Salvador was encouraging, knowing perfectly well that from his point of view it wasn't encouraging. He didn't want peace in El Salvador until every last commie had been wiped out.

Q: What was Lucier's background?

JONES: Academic, I think. It seems to me that he was a professor of philosophy somewhere. But we got through the meeting and I think the next day I went to see Helms. Nance was with Helms; Lucier was not. Helms, as he normally is when he is dealing with someone directly, was the soul of courtesy. He asked me if I had anything to do with those two documents. By sheer good luck I did not. I would have thought that the odds of picking two documents out of a file of Chilean papers and of my not having anything to do with them were extraordinarily poor. But as it happened, one of them had been written in Washington while I was in Chile, and the other had been written in Chile while I was on home leave. So I could honestly say I did not have anything to do with them. Fortunately, he didn't ask me if I agreed with the two documents. For example, did I agree with Abrams' characterization of Helms in his memo? But he didn't ask. That was all of the interrogation that he had. All of those long questions he said in the hearing he wanted to ask me had somehow disappeared. The perverse came out in me, I said to myself, I am an Ambassador-Designate meeting with a United States Senator, I should do what I think normally should be done in such occasions, so I gave him about five minutes briefing on

Guyana which thoroughly glazed his eyes over. No interest whatsoever. We bid farewell very cordially. That was my one and only meeting with Helms. Shortly thereafter, a hearing was scheduled with no difficulty. Now I had an entirely new set of colleagues to go through it with. The Senators present were Dodd and Lugar, who were extremely friendly. Helms did not show up, although Debra DeMoss, Helms' Latin American aide at that time, I met in the hallway outside for the first and only time. I think she came into the hearing room for a few minutes and left.

Dodd, in spite of his friendliness, asked me a very difficult question. He said, “Is it true that Cheddi Jagan, the leader of the opposition in Guyana, is still a Communist? Is it possible after all these years, he is still a Communist?” In the first place at that point I had no idea and secondly it was almost an impossible question to answer in a hearing where for all I knew there could be some member of the press tucked away somewhere in the rear rows. I stumbled through an answer in some form, and that was it. My and other pending nominations were approved on the day before Thanksgiving 1991, without objection by the Senate. It had been 17 months from the time of my initial nomination—25 months from the time I was first asked if I would like to go. But 17 months from the time of nomination to confirmation was and I believe still is the record. In the entire history of the foreign service there have been others who have been held up for comparable or longer periods and never made it. Of those who eventually made it, it took me the longest to get there. I passed Melissa Wells who had been the previous record holder. When I went to tell her that I had seized her record, she said that was a dubious distinction at best.

Q: Something like this, one can sort of laugh afterwards but how did it affect you with the family and all this? I would think this thing would have an impact.

JONES: Well, it did. Also there were some things in our personal life that were happening simultaneously with this. We had to take custody of four small children, three nephews and a niece of my wife's for whom we were the only logical custodians, and they came to live with us in January of '91. So there was a tremendous amount going on in my personal

life. I certainly owe my wife a great debt of gratitude for putting up with it all and seeing me through it. But we survived.

Q: You must have been the most thoroughly briefed Ambassador Designate that one can think of to a major country like Guyana.

JONES: Well I had to go through all of my briefing in 1990. There was this damned pre-clearance thing. It seemed likely that it was going to go through that year so obviously I had to be prepared, touch all the bases, go around to all the various agencies of the government and find the private companies that had interests in Guyana and so forth. In August of 1990 the Department asked of I would go to the Capstone course at the National War College for about six weeks. It is designed for military officers who are being promoted to general and admiral ranks. They have one place for a foreign service officer who is being promoted to Ambassador in the course. During the course we went to Ottawa and visited the Canadian Government, so I used that visit to consult with the Latin American division of the Canadian Foreign Ministry. All these meetings I had gone through introducing myself as the Ambassador Designate to Guyana. I didn't get there until a year and a half later. My embarrassment was acute; I think there was some embarrassment to the United States. I was sworn in in December of 1991, and I arrived in Guyana on January 18, 1992.

Q: You were there from when to when?

JONES: From January 1992 until August 1995.

Q: At that time, what were American interests in Guyana and what was the situation in Guyana?

JONES: There were some interesting parallels to Chile. Major differences of course, Chile was a much larger country. Certainly relations with Chile under Pinochet loomed much larger in the State Department's eyes than Guyana. But Guyana also had had

a long period without a free election. At the time the British were thinking about giving it independence, in the early '60's, the two major political leaders were Cheddi Jagan, a Guyanese of Indian descent who had studied at Howard University and then taken a dental degree from Northwestern University, and Forbes Burnham, a Guyanese of African descent who was a lawyer. While in Chicago, Jagan had met an American, Janet Rosenberg, and married her. Janet, if she wasn't a card-carrying Communist, was the next thing to it and certainly converted Cheddi to Communism. Cheddi returned to Guyana with Janet, went into politics, and won all the elections that were held under the British colonial administration except for the very last one. The British who were initially very reluctant to turn an independent Guyana over to him were clearly coming around to the view that there was no alternative. No matter how many elections they held, he kept winning them. But then Cheddi paid a visit to Washington in '61, I guess, met with Kennedy at the White House, and gave a famous speech at the National Press Club. Kennedy of course was very concerned not to have another Fidel Castro in Latin America, not to have a second Cuba. Although Cheddi said lots of things about wanting good relations with the United States, he didn't give quite the right answers. He wouldn't forthrightly deny that he was a Communist or assure us that he wouldn't have anything to do with the Communists. So the Kennedy administration decided that it should pressure the British to prevent him from coming to power. The Foreign Relations volume with all the documents on this is supposed to be coming out within the next few months. Their publication has been approved.

The methodology that was eventually arrived at was to change the Constitution to provide for proportional representation instead of first-past-the-post elections. So an election was held on that basis in 1964. There were three forces in Parliament, none of which had a majority: Burnham and Jagan and a smaller conservative pro-business party led by an important businessman. He had the same view as the United States, that at all costs, Jagan must be prevented from coming to power. So he threw his support to Forbes Burnham. Burnham was named prime minister and the British granted independence to

Guyana. A number of other things were done as well to help insure Burnham's election. But ironically, after a number of years of getting along well with the United States and Britain, Burnham began turning increasingly toward the Communist Bloc and toward dictatorship and state socialism internally. Something over 80% of the economy was controlled by the government at the time of Burnham's death. My own view is that Jagan could not have possibly been as bad a leader for Guyana as Burnham turned out to be. A spectacular illustration of the risks we run when we try to choose who is best for another country. The uncertainties of that calculus are such that time after time we have been burned, and we were certainly burned in Guyana. We pulled out the Peace Corps, closed down our AID mission. Relations were absolutely at the zero point. Gerald Thomas, Reagan's first Ambassador to Guyana, a political appointee, met with Burnham only once his entire time there, relations were so bad. Burnham died on the operating table under Cuban doctors in 1985 in what was supposed to be a routine operation. They sent his body off to Moscow to be preserved the way Lenin's body was. It was supposed to be viewable in a tomb like Lenin's. Somehow it didn't quite work. The Mausoleum is there but it had to be closed, not for open viewing. Burnham was succeeded by a man named Desmond Hoyte, who was his prime minister. Burnham in the meantime had converted himself from Prime Minister to President, and Hoyte was his Prime Minister and became President on Burnham's death and was confirmed as President in an election held in December of 1985. All of the elections that were held after 1964 were highly suspect. They were not free and fair by any standard. So Hoyte's term of office was supposedly up in 1990, just as I was getting ready to come to Guyana. Hoyte looked at the situation Guyana was in and concluded that the only hope for the country was a 180 degree turn. Up to that point, he had been a faithful follower of Burnham's and still talks about him with great affection and nostalgia and so on, but he reversed his policies totally. He began to let foreign investment in. He sold the telephone company to American investors. He cleared up Guyana's arrears to the international lending agencies. He began to give indications that he wanted the 1990 elections to be regarded as free and fair. He told the State Department, I sat in on some of these meetings as Ambassador Designate,

that he planned to invite the Commonwealth to send observers to the election. Well, the Commonwealth had observers at previous elections, and they hadn't filed a very credible report, the obvious supposition being that they didn't like having to criticize another Commonwealth member. So the State Department said that's fine but we think you also ought to invite the Carter Center. A bit to everyone's surprise, an invitation was extended to President Carter. Carter went down there in September of 1990 and did the kind of negotiation that only Carter can get away with. He only spent 24 hours in Guyana, but he had done his homework beforehand, and he knew what had to be changed to prevent the election from being stolen once again. It was absolutely clear that whatever Hoyte's intentions were, and there was some doubt about that, it was clear that there were members of his party who had been in power for 26 years and had no intention of giving it up easily. So Carter, just before the end of his visit, and just before a scheduled press conference, told Hoyte that unless Hoyte agreed to do the following things, he was going to announce at the press conference that he was not going to be able to accept the invitation to observe the elections because he couldn't have anything to do with elections that were questionable. So he had Hoyte over a large barrel, and Hoyte agreed to everything that Carter asked. My own view is that Hoyte knew that from the moment he invited Carter, Hoyte was no fool, he didn't know everything he was going to have to concede, but he knew there was a damn good risk that he was going to lose the election, and that he was putting his Presidency on the line by inviting Carter. I think he did it with his eyes open. He did it because he could see no choice for Guyana. So Carter agreed to observe the elections. The various changes that were agreed to began to be implemented, but in best Guyanese fashion with stops and starts and twists and turns. So the elections did not in fact take place in 1990. They still had not taken place when I got there in January of 1992. Hoyte's term just got extended. They wound up being held on October 5, 1992. Which to my private amusement was exactly four years to the day after the plebiscite in Chile in which Pinochet had been defeated. The delays were caused by trying to get a clean voters list and all of the hassles related to that. But we finally got a list that was reasonably accurate. The chairman of the elections commission was changed

and an honest man was put in charge of it. The counting of votes had in the past been done according to the British system, at a central counting places. They don't count votes at the place of poll. Carter got Hoyte to agree to count at the place of poll because the big mechanism of fraud had been between the polling place and the counting place, boxes had mysteriously disappeared, and been replaced by others. So my first nine months in Guyana were spent preparing for the elections.

Q: When you arrived there I assume there was no great difficulty seeing Hoyte and all that.

JONES: There was certainly no difficulty in presenting credentials. The Guyanese were very nice about that. I think I arrived on Saturday, the Foreign Minister received me on Monday, and I presented credentials on Tuesday. When I thanked the Foreign Minister for that very speedy action he smiled and said, “Well we thought you had waited long enough.”

Q: They understood what the situation was. The American political overtone.

JONES: Yes. Certainly the Foreign Minister, Cedric Grant, did. He was in fact simultaneously Ambassador to the United States. In fact I first called on him in Washington in his role as Ambassador. Hoyte had asked him to come back to Guyana. He didn't actually have the title of Foreign Minister because he couldn't be that and Ambassador simultaneously, and he didn't want to give up his Ambassadorship, so they called him special advisor to the President on foreign affairs. He was functioning as Foreign Minister. But it was not terribly easy to see Hoyte or to deal with Hoyte. Hoyte was a very private person to begin with. He had a major tragedy in his personal life. His two daughters were killed in an automobile accident. He was not an easy person to get close to and was very much, both while in the job and out of it, conscious of being President. He wanted all the formalities paid to that status. That is practically the only Guyanese I can say that about. The Guyanese are a very delightful people, very hospitable, and care very little about protocol.

Jagan received me very warmly. The whole story of Cheddi Jagan is a fascinating one. He bore no resentment toward the United States for having prevented him from becoming Prime Minister. Maybe he did at one time but by the time I got there he certainly bore none. He was an avid listener to the Voice of America. He was always writing in to the VOA commenting on their programs or asking them for more information on something that he had heard on one of their broadcasts. He had heard an interview I had given to VOA after being confirmed. He liked that interview and that got me off to a good start. I asked him the question Senator Dodd had asked me. He replied that he was a Marxist-Leninist, and that he wasn't going to apologize for it.

Q: You are talking about '92 when Marxism and Leninism was really falling apart in the Motherland and elsewhere.

JONES: That was the one and only time I ever talked to him about it. I didn't think it was very productive to rehash the past in terms of accomplishing my mission. But other people, journalists and historians, were always asking him about it. He didn't like to talk about it particularly. He was annoyed that it was brought up with such frequency. But when compelled to talk about it, he would say Communism had never really been properly tried. The Soviet Union had messed it up. Stalin had gotten off on the wrong course so that if you could have true socialism, that would work a lot better than what had been tried in the Soviet Union. But, he would add, this is all irrelevant because this is not the issue of the moment. Guyana certainly needed foreign investment, and he wanted the best possible relations with the United States and with foreign investors. He never apologized; he never retracted anything. In fact I don't think that in his mind he ever changed his views, but he adapted to circumstances. He was enough of a politician to be a pragmatist. He saw clearly that there was no further assistance coming from the Soviet Union, that he had to work with the West. He also saw that the West, not the East, had helped him at long last get back into power. It was the West that was guaranteeing a free election; it was not anybody from Eastern Europe. I think he was really very grateful. He awarded a decoration

to Jimmy Carter after he got to be President. He was very grateful for the assistance that the United States in particular had rendered.

Q: What was the evaluation at that time of his wife? I remember hearing over the years hat she was more red hot red than anybody else and still maintained her American citizenship. I was just wondering what was the feeling at the time you were there?

JONES: Well, both Cheddi and Janet I found charming. I always wondered if I would have found them less charming earlier in their careers when they were both fire brands and when they were not so disposed to be accommodating and neither felt the same gratitude toward the United States nor the same dependency on the United States. But they are certainly very nice people. They are grandparents. Their daughter became a Canadian citizen; their son became a US citizen. Their son was a dentist in New York for about 12 years, came back to Guyana after strong arm-twisting by his parents after his father became President, moved his dental practice to Georgetown. He complained constantly about having to put up with this third world country. He didn't use those words but that was the gist. How he missed the United States and how the United States was the greatest country in the world. I mean the ironies are just profound. Janet had in fact been deprived of her citizenship twice. Once for voting in a foreign election, got it restored, and then taken away again when she was elected to the Guyana legislature, and swore allegiance to Guyana. When Clinton invited Jagan and four other Caribbean leaders to have lunch at the White House in August of '93, his advisor for Latin America, Richard Feinberg, called me and asked me to look into the status of her citizenship and if she still wasn't a citizen, what could we do about restoring it. So I did that and was told that in the light of all the court decisions in the intervening years, she had never voluntarily given it up and therefore it was hers for the asking and she could have it back. I went to see her and laid all this out. She was very nice about it and must have been secretly amused. The American Ambassador coming to see her and offering her her citizenship back. She said she would have to talk to the family, and of course it was difficult now that her husband

was President. She never got back to me on it, never took any further steps, so I just kind of let it lie.

I heard the same thing, that she was the more forceful and committed of the two. I think certainly she must have had the intellectual convictions of Communism. Cheddi was not an intellectual. He was a political leader, a politician. There must have been a time of conversion, but once he was converted I don't think he was as solidly embedded in theoretical marriage to Communist ideas as she was. I don't know whether she would have been as pragmatic as he was. I mean if she had been the Guyanese President, would she have bent as easily with the prevailing winds, I just don't know. There was no visible evidence that she opposed his revisionist policies, his pragmatic course of action.

Q: This period leading up to the election, nine months or so, I imagine there was some attention. It obviously wasn't on the front burner but there was some attention. What was your role? What were you doing?

JONES: We were monitoring the process and reporting on it, trying to do everything that we could to ensure that it would be a free and fair election. I think that everyone who knew anything about Guyana thought that Jagan was the overwhelmingly likely winner for demographic reasons if for nothing else. The East Indian section of the population was the majority, somewhere between 50 and 55%. The African descent, 40-45%. The rest were mixed and assorted other ancestors. Everything indicated that the East Indians had a fanatical loyalty to Cheddi and always had. He won his first elective office in Guyana in 1947. By the time of the Bush and Clinton administrations, the shadow or the specter of a second Marxist leader in the hemisphere didn't worry anybody anymore. We no longer had a security concern that Soviet bases would come to be based in Guyana. That was not going to happen in the world of 1990-92. What we wanted to do is keep this process building of converting every country in the Americas to a democracy, for a variety of reasons including the reason that this would isolate Cuba and identify it as the odd man out in the Americas, which it is today. During this first period in Guyana,

that was my overwhelming interest. There were little obstacles on the road, but on the whole, all the preparations went well. For the elections in October, a huge number of foreign observers came down. The Carter Center brought 66 observers for the election; the Commonwealth had another 20 or 30 I think, and then there were various other smaller groups that showed up.

We also had the Deputy Assistant Secretary who was responsible for the Caribbean, Donna Hrinak. On election day she and I visited a polling place, and things were going smoothly; voting was taking place in an orderly fashion. Everything seemed to be going just fine. I was giving a lunch in her honor. Our guests had arrived and we had sat down to lunch. Then the phone rang. There were a couple of Americans who were working at the elections commission. In order to get a clean voters list and an efficient voters list that was computerized, foreign technicians had to be brought in. Actually the UN provided the computer programmers to put the voters list into the computers and set up the computers for receiving the results of the election as well. The senior person was an American named John Gargett. Gargett called me and told me the elections commission was under attack. There was a large crowd outside and they were stoning the building. He was very concerned; they had a couple of policemen there and that was it. They were unarmed, as Guyanese policemen, like the British, normally were. John was very fearful that at any moment the crowd was going to storm the building, run right up the stairs to the computer center and wreck the equipment and threaten the lives of all the foreign programmers including his own. He asked for help. I went to Donna and told her, sorry, I need to get down to the election commissions building. She said I'll go with you, so we piled into the car and headed off to the commission and found conditions exactly as described. There was indeed a sizable crowd outside the door in a very bad mood, as I found out by trying to talk to some of them. In this three story building every pane of glass in it had been shattered. So we worked our way through the crowd and into the building and found the chairman of the commission holding a press conference with mostly foreign press on the ground floor of the building. Gargett and the other technicians were also down there. The

press conference broke up, and Gargett and the others said, “get us out of here. This is totally unsafe.” Donna and I led the way out of the building, and just as we came out, the mob began to throw stones again. Some of the glass cut me on the hand and scalp, but we made it out of the building and back to the cars. One of the Commonwealth observers was there, a remarkable lady from New Zealand named Dame Anne Hercus. She said why don't we go see the police commissioner. Some of the cars took the technicians off to the hotel. There was no major problem anywhere except right there in front of the elections building. Dame Anne and Donna and I went off to see the police commissioner, and after some delay got in to see him. He was talking on about four phones at once; there was further delay until he could give us any attention, and in effect made no promises. He said he thought the building had adequate police protection as it was. He did in fact send a few additional policemen to the building. And the technicians, at our urging, went back to the building. Things quieted down. One of the things that happened, the chairman of the elections commission made the very... the complaint of the crowd was that they had not been able to vote. Well, as I had determined by talking to the people, the problem was that they thought all they needed in order to vote was their national identity card. I don't doubt that in past elections that was all they needed. But in 1992 they were supposed to have registered to vote and to be on the voters list. They had not found their names on the list and they were very upset. So the chairman of the elections commission decided to set up a special ballot box and let all these people vote. An absolutely brilliant idea. Their votes were not counted so it was sort of a smoke and mirrors thing, but it got them calmed down and gave them the feeling of satisfaction. So the atmosphere had calmed down and the technicians had gone back to the building.

But around nightfall I got a call from them again saying there were still just a handful of policemen in front of the center. They could see there was looting going on and people running up and down the street, there were still a considerable number of people outside the building, and they were still very concerned about their safety. Carter had been out of town during the day. He had flown off to the interior to watch the voting, but by this point

he was back in town and we briefed him on what had transpired. He went to the elections commissions building, and then picked up the phone and called Hoyte and said, “I'm a former president of the United States and I'm here in this building. I'm not concerned about myself because I have the Secret Service here with me, but I think that if any kind of mob got into this building it would cause very unfortunate press for Guyana.” So Hoyte at that point gave the order and suddenly miraculously, lots of policemen appeared and some army armored personnel carriers were quietly moved into place a few blocks away.

Q: the mob that was outside there were they distinguished as being black as opposed to being Indian or...

JONES: Yes. Of course the population of the city was overwhelmingly black. The East Indian population was overwhelmingly rural. If you had a crowd in Georgetown, the odds are that it would be black. The looting that was going on was looting of Indian stores with Indian names. There is a real racial factor in Guyana. As soon as I heard that Carter had gone to the Commission, I joined him. Later in the evening the British and Canadian High Commissioners cane as well. We stayed there for several hours just to give the technicians some moral support and make sure that nothing further went wrong. In fact nobody ever did enter the building. Who knows why they didn't. I mean they could have easily done so and destroyed everything in the building during almost any point in the day but they didn't. We came within a hair of losing the election, that is, of not having had one. If they would have destroyed the computers it would have been very difficult to have continued with the election. It certainly would have given a perfect excuse to those who didn't want to continue with the election. But the votes were counted. The Carter people did a quick count, a selection of precincts that were representative of the entire vote. Carter went to see Hoyte and Jagan the next morning and told them the results of his quick count showed Jagan ahead by 14 points. The actual vote was 11 points, but Carter said their margin of error was three points, so it was within the margin. So the results were announced; Jagan had won.

There is a park in Georgetown which has an oval path through it which is fine for jogging or walking. I used to go there and walk every afternoon that I could. I was walking around the path one afternoon a few days later and an Indian lady walked past me in the opposite direction. She went past and just looked at me and said, “Thank you.” A lady that I had never met before and as far as I know never met again. That meant a lot.

Q: From our perspective were there any important changes when Jagan came in? We're talking about really the late '92 up through '95 period. Did things change particularly?

JONES: Well, yes. In several contradictory ways. On the one hand, I found access to the President much easier. I found the relationship with the President much easier. I had no trouble getting in to see him and it was always a very relaxed and friendly situation when I did see him. His cabinet was a funny mixture of some very competent people and some much less competent people. There were clearly great debates within the government on just how far to go with this private enterprise nonsense. The election was the high point of my tenure. A very emotional moment, a very satisfying moment to have seen another country through to democracy. There is no question Jagan is going to run an honest election the next time they come up, next year, October of '97. Hoyte had done a lot but he hadn't done everything. The atmosphere in the media was still very controlled when I first arrived. Jagan opened up the media. There was no longer any sense of intimidation or pressure. He gave no indication of having any problem with, well that's a little too strong. There was one occasion when not he himself but his party issued an angry statement about one of the independent newspapers. But on the whole, the whole atmosphere of the country changed to a genuinely free one following the election. So that was very satisfactory. But from that point on the main issue I was concerned with, the main thing the US government wanted me to do during the remainder of my time there, was to try to persuade them to privatize, to get rid of these highly unprofitable government enterprises that were causing their budget deficits, and open the door for foreign investment, in particular American private investment. We were able to restart the AID program. We were

able to bring back the Peace Corps. Of course our AID program was tied to compliance with the IMF. The IMF and the IDB and the major Western powers were all trying to get them to privatize. Success in this area was virtually zero. Those remaining two and a half years were on the whole quite frustrating. I had the sense of having a lot of chips that we had won by astutely and honorably playing in the poker game and yet never succeeding in cashing any of them in.

Q: I would have thought that with an Indian population, along with the Chinese and others, these are entrepreneurs from their fingertips. I would have thought that no matter what the proclivities of Jagan and his immediate entourage, he would be dealing with a bunch of small shopkeepers.

JONES: And some of them not so small. There were some very substantial, not substantial in US terms, although there was one family in particular that was substantial even by US standards. The Indians dominated the business community. The blacks were the civil service, the army, the police. The middle class Indians dominated the business community and they had financed Jagan's campaign, plus the communities overseas. One of the remarkable features of Guyanese election campaigns is that both Hoyte and Jagan went off to the US to hold campaign rallies and collect money from Guyanese living in the US and Canada. But in spite of that, the Indian businessmen expressed time and again their frustration at not being able to get through to Jagan. He had all kinds of concerns. He was genuinely worried about the poor. Jagan was somebody, it's hard to say this about a politician, in whom there was hardly a devious bone in his body. What you saw, what you heard from Jagan was it! He was very sincere, I mean the reason he had become a Communist was that he became convinced that was the way to help people, the poor, to raise up the masses. For example, one of the worst run of the government enterprises was the electric company. He was very concerned that if he privatized the electric company, what would happen to the electric rates, people would have to pay more. I and dozens of other people said to him, “Okay, you can skew the rates. You can make the rates high on your Indian businessmen friends and low on the average consumer.” He shot back

immediately, ah but the businessmen would simply pass it along and raise their prices in order to make up for their increased electricity costs.

The second factor was nostalgia and unwillingness to admit error. He had been the one who had nationalized the electric company in the 1950's when he was premier of the colonial government. He just couldn't bring himself to undo that. He is certainly a nationalist if nothing else. That was one issue where he had a lot of black support as well. The idea of foreigners controlling the electric company just stuck in their craw. There were all sorts of schemes for part ownership by local businessmen and part ownership by foreign investors and the state would keep a minority ownership. These ideas were all discussed endlessly and none of them got anywhere. The same thing with the state airline. He would always listen, and his ministers would always listen. They were always extremely polite. I began to be very negative with American businessmen and they would think that I was trying to keep them out of doing business with Guyana, but all I was trying to do was warn them. They would come away glowing from their first meetings. They seemed so interested. They wanted investment. They told us how much they wanted American investment in here and how much that would help the country. Then I would watch it as the weeks went on. Then they would come and see me and say you know you were right. These guys don't really want foreign investment in here.

Q: During this period you were there, did the Cubans play any particular role?

JONES: No. The Cubans still had an embassy there. The Russians, the North Koreans, the Chinese, that was the remnant that was left; I'm told that at one time the place was just inundated with East Germans, Bulgarians, they were all there. The Cuban Ambassador who was there for most of the time I was there was a very friendly sort. The American School even talked us into doing a debate once. Well sort of. It was on separate nights. I thought it wise not to appear on the same platform with a government we didn't recognize so I spoke one night and he spoke the following night. The Cubans had on the whole a very low profile. They did have a group of about 40 doctors there to assist the public health

system and some of them would periodically defect. But that was the only aid program they had left. They did very little. Oh, every time something major would happen in US-Cuban relations, he would hold a press conference and condemn us but otherwise played no role. The North Koreans even less. Very little was even seen of the North Koreans even at diplomatic functions. They never did anything publicly. The Russian was a very nice guy, Mikhail Sobolev. We became good friends. Of course by the time I was there they were flying the red white and blue flag, put up on December 31, 1991. He had nothing to play a role with. The Russians and ourselves had built new embassies at the same time. They built a massive structure, a full city block including apartments. And to our great envy a swimming pool and tennis courts. After the change there was no staff to put into this nor any interest in Moscow in having it. They decided not to sell it but instead to lease it to a hotel. A fence was built through the middle of the compound. The swimming pool, tennis courts, and apartments were converted into a hotel.

Q: Did the tragedy in Jonestown, you know we are talking 20 years ago, were there any reverberations from that?

JONES: Not really. The Guyanese, as some of the Latin countries do as well, stole their TV off the satellites. They just downloaded the signal. So we enjoyed a limited amount of American television. Every time that motion picture was shown about Jim Jones, “The Guyana Tragedy,” that got great viewership in Georgetown, the only movie that ever featured Guyana. But it was not something they liked to talk about. Obviously they were mortified that the only thing that most Americans knew about Guyana was “Oh, wasn't that where that crazy guy made everybody drink Kool Aid?”

Q: What about outside of Georgetown, getting around in Guyana out in the bush or whatever you call it. And also relations with Brazil and Venezuela?

JONES: Getting around the country was easier than I had expected. There is quite a good paved road that runs from Georgetown, which in the middle of the Atlantic coast,

all the way to the eastern border with Suriname. The same road makes a 90 degree turn and goes south from Georgetown about 30 miles to a bauxite mining town called Linden. (Linden Forbes Burnham named it after himself.) The American and Canadian bauxite companies were another thing that were nationalized, by Burnham in that case. Those were essentially the only paved roads in the country, that one road with its 90 degree turn. So you could travel quite easily along to coast and to Linden by car. Beyond that you really had to have a four wheel drive vehicle and you could drive over unpaved roads for further distances. There were many rivers, and you could go up them by boat, or you could fly. As in many of the Latin countries, there are small landing strips all over the place and lots of small private planes around. Not at all difficult to get yourself a ride into the interior. Anywhere there was any significant economic activity, there were people flying in in small planes, because that was the only time-effective way to get in. The interior is quite beautiful. The interior is a subsection of the Amazon rain forest and as the Amazon rain forest is burnt off and chopped down, the Guyana portion of it is one of the last unspoiled virgin rain forests in the world. Another thing I tried to do and kept being frustrated about was to get some kind of interest shown by the US Government and non-governmental organizations in the Guyanese rain forest. Again highly frustrating and no real success. The World Wildlife Fund was very interested at the time I was first going down to Guyana, but their condition of cooperation with Guyana, was for Guyana's one national park to be expanded substantially, increased about ten times in size in order to provide some legal basis for protection. They told the Guyanese that if they would take that step, the World Wildlife Fund would go out and raise funds for Guyana worldwide, and give it a lot of publicity as a country courageously protecting its environment. But the Guyanese would never take that step. Neither the Hoyte nor the Jagan administrations were willing to, basically because they weren't willing to close the door permanently to development of that large an area. In any developing country the dilemma is a severe one. They want to protect the environment, but they also want development. The United States and other industrialized countries didn't protect the environment when they were developing, why

should they? As they saw it, they were now being asked to do the things we were unwilling to do when we were going through the developmental phase.

Q: George, maybe we are coming to the end here. Things can be added on. I take it you got your election and everything was fine and then you began tilting at these windmills.

JONES: The windmills of privatization. The one political issue that came up after the election, they had another election incidentally, municipal elections in '94, which ran very smoothly with much less furor and tension. In the political area the only other issue that required major attention was getting Guyanese support for our objectives in Haiti. Which was originally trying to get them to take Haitian refugees. A lot of major efforts were made. I made efforts with Jagan, leaned on him harder than on any other issue the whole time I knew him. I got what I told the Department was as close as Jagan ever came to saying no. What he said was “the boys in the party are not enthusiastic about this.” I told the Department, you should read that as this is not going to happen. Then he went off to a conference in Barbados, and the Department sent its top Haitian people down to this conference at least in part to work on Jagan. Bill Grey, the President's special advisor on Haiti, Jim Dobbins and various people, I'm told met with him for five hours. An extraordinary example of Jagan's patience and good will that he devoted that much time to a group of people that he knew he was going to say no to in the end anyway. They got nowhere with him. They got a yes from Suriname and in fact we moved in military engineers and built a big camp in Suriname. Then just as we got it built the need for housing refugees disappeared because we made the decision that we were going to go in to Haiti.

So then instructions came out for the new pitch. The new pitch was that we wanted Caribbean participation in the multinational force. The Guyanese had been very nervous, an Indian government was nervous about taking black refugees, but they were quite prepared to participate in a UN force in Haiti, but then we made it clear that what we were asking them to do was to participate in a US-led force which was going to be the precursor

to the UN force. Because the reality was the UN would not come in until someone else had made things safer. That gave them considerable pause, and again I had to work very hard on Jagan and the Foreign Minister. It was a close thing. I think Guyana was the last of the Caribbean countries to come aboard, but they did finally agree to participate. At any one time they had about 50 Guyanese in Haiti. All things considered, given their history of total non-cooperation with the US in foreign policy matters, it was a big step forward in US-Guyanese relations, and I was proud of my part in it.

Q: Then you retired in '95?

JONES: Yes. I did some soundings as I suspect everyone does as to whether there might be another chief of mission assignment. There were no indications that one would be forthcoming. So I put in my retirement papers and planned to retire after leaving Guyana in August of '95. But then the Department called up and twisted my arm to go up to New York and be the Latin American advisor to the UN delegation. So I did that from September to December and then retired the last day of the year 1995.

Q: That was great, George!

End of interview